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The Week

CHAIRMAN Eccles of the Federal Reserve Board, Secretary Wallace and Secretary Roper all warned against the danger of a boom, during the week ending March 23, and deplored rapid price increases. Mr. Eccles in this connection advocated balancing the budget, but congressional spokesmen reiterated that no tax increases are in prospect, and expenditures are not likely to be reduced. . . . In Detroit the sit-down strike against Chrysler continued because the company would not modify its position of refusing to bargain with the union as a sole agent for the employees. A wave of strikes continued in sit-down or other forms in the Middle West; a great mass meeting was held in Detroit to protest forcible police interference with sit-downers, and a general strike was threatened if this interference was renewed. The textile organizing campaign was begun. Sporadic strikes appeared elsewhere in the country, including one which gained a wage increase for the retail clerks of Providence, and one against Woolworth stores in New York City, in which the police and magistrates lined up frankly with the employer against the underpaid girls. Bethlehem Steel settled with the steel union. . . . The controversy about the Supreme Court centered about hearings of the Senate Judiciary Committee; important testimony of law-school deans and other authorities favoring the President's plan was shoved off the front pages of the papers; but Chief Justice Hughes's letter saying that a larger membership would make the Court less efficient brought the story back to the main headlines. . . . A school in New London, Texas, was destroyed by an explosion of leaking natural gas, killing and wounding many children.

SPAIN again dominated the foreign news during the same week by news of a crushing defeat inflicted by the government upon the Italian divisions which had advanced upon Madrid from the northeast along the Aragon Road. All the territory gained by the offensive was reoccupied, enormous quantities of ammunition and material were taken, heavy losses were inflicted upon the routed fascist army and many prisoners were captured. These Italian troops were apparently among those shipped in by Italy after she had agreed to send no more. Prisoners said they had volunteered to fight in Ethiopia. Accounts of the action indicate that the government now has a superiority in tanks and planes and is using propaganda to good effect. . . . The Pope issued an encyclical against the Nazi suppression of the Church in Germany. . . . The unpopularity of Italy in Austria, of whose existing regime Mussolini is the official "protector," was indicated when a football game in Vienna between the two countries broke up in a riot. . . . Mussolini, while his legions were being ignominiously routed in Spain, made a visit to Libya, where his appeal for Mohammedan support caused uneasiness to France and England. . . . Japan continued to give at least the appearance of less aggressiveness toward China. . . . A meeting of Colonel de la Rocque's fascist Social Party in a workers' suburb of Paris led to a riot in which five were killed and hundreds injured. Communist protests against the conduct of the police failed to threaten seriously the stability of the Blum government.

THE effort of the CIO to extend the benefit of general unionism to the textile industry is noteworthy for a number of reasons. A committee has been

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formed, the Textile Workers' Organizing Committee, which will bear the same relationship to the union having direct jurisdiction—the United Textile Workers—that the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee had to the steel union. This Committee will be headed by President Sidney Hillman of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, who as a skillful and forceful labor statesman is second to none, and it will be well staffed and well financed. Textile mills have more employees than any other manufacturing industry in the United States, and the industry is widely scattered. The general level of wages is lower than it is in most other important occupations. An excellent report from the International Labor Office of the League of Nations on the World Textile Industry, issued in preparation for an international textile conference to be held in Washington in early April, indicates in part why this is so. The industry is international; prices for both its raw materials and many of its standard products are largely determined in world markets. Some important producing countries—in particular Japan—have excessively low wages. These facts, however, should not be cited as obstacles to gains by organized textile labor in this country. The domestic market suffers little, as a matter of fact, from Japanese or other foreign competition, and most of our production is for this market. In so far as the problem is international, moreover, one of the first requirements for its solution is a general spread of labor organization.

OPPONENTS of the President's proposal for reorganizing the Supreme Court have kept up a shrill and ceaseless verbal attack since the very first day the plan was announced. Opposition mounts almost to hysteria at times, and one such moment was registered when Senator King of Utah hurled the charge that the big radio networks were actively favoring supporters of the President and denying the opposition a proper hearing on the air. Even a little bit of reflection would have reminded the Senator that the broadcasting chains are directly dependent upon public favor for their existence and from purest self-interest—if for no better reasons—they would not dare show bias concerning a question on which there is such a sharp cleavage as on this one. This is so true that it seems almost superfluous to quote the latest official compilation showing that among the speakers thus far on the Columbia Broadcasting System, seventeen have been in favor of the plan and seventeen against; while the National Broadcasting Company to date shows twenty-six for and twenty-five against. An interesting sidelight on this situation is reported by the League for Political Education, whose program known as America's Town Meeting of the Air is broadcast over an NBC network on Thursday nights. This program seeks to present both sides of live, controversial issues. The directors say that there are always plenty of speakers available to uphold the progressive side of current questions, but week after week it takes ceaseless effort to dig up qualified speakers who are willing to uphold the conservative side. We can fully appreciate this difficulty. New Republic readers will remember what a time we had trying to find an intelligent Landon voter during the past campaign.

SPEAKING in New York, Mr. Hilaire Belloc said that the war in Spain is essentially "a war between that which made our civilization, that by which it still lives—the Christian religion—and that which would root out and destroy. The matter at issue is the Church of God!" In the very next column of The New York Times which quotes these remarks is a map showing the region where the Spanish government army had just driven back Italian fascist divisions, sent to fight it by that great Christian and saint, Mussolini. In the column next but one is reported a statement that General Franco's army contains 39,000 Germans, who were dispatched in defense of the Church of God, we assume, by the humble Hitler. Or perhaps it was the 78,000 Mohammedan Moors that Mr. Belloc was thinking of as champions of Christianity. Mr. Belloc has a reputation as a medievalist, and his immersion in the doctrines of the Middle Ages may have led him to think that Christianity can be advanced by killing instead of by loving enemies. But in those forthright days the Church usually depended upon Christians to fight for it, and directed its hostility against all those who denied its doctrines and authority.

THE people of Mexico are taking determined steps to avoid the danger of the fascist-militarist dictatorships that have beset so many Latin American countries. Labor, radical and progressive elements have united to form the Mexican People's Front to uphold the existing Republic, carry forward reforms and turn back the challenge of any would-be dictator. The organizations in the People's Front include the powerful central labor body, the CTM (Confederation of Mexican Workers), the National Revolutionary Party (the government party), the Peasant Confederation and the Communist Party of Mexico. At a recent mass meeting in Mexico City all present lauded the courageous action of Mexico in exercising its legal rights to send aid to the loyal government of Spain. Vincente Lombardo Toledano, general secretary of the CTM, called for an energetic fight against war, fascism, imperialism and the Mexican reaction, and invited all Mexicans who earn their living by their labor, whether manual or intellectual, to enter the CTM and to regard that organization as the best possible safeguard of national interest and independence.

WE ARE glad to see the American Civil Liberties Union bring suit for libel against The American Mercury. All too often individuals and organizations of progressive outlook who are working for justice and fundamental human rights are made the targets of loose and irresponsible charges of "revo-

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lutionary intent" and attempts to overthrow the government by force. It is a stimulating thing to see such an organization strike back, for a change, and invite its attackers to come into court and prove their charges. In the present instance The American Mercury printed in its December issue an article, "The Civil Liberties Union," whose general tone was indicated by its subtitle, "Liberalism à la Moscow." The piece was written by a man named Harold Lord Varney, who turns out to have a decoration from Mussolini and who was formerly on the staff of The Awakener, a self-admitted fascist publication. According to Arthur Garfield Hays and Morris L. Ernst, general counsel for the ACLU, the net effect of the article was to charge that the Union "is an organization soliciting contributions under false pretenses and is an organization the real purpose and practice of which is to foster revolution and to overthrow the government of the United States by force." If there is any truth in such an accusation the 5,000 members of the ACLU, including hundreds of attorneys, teachers, clergymen and others of high professional standing, would like to know about it, and a court of law which makes provisions for damages if charges are false is an excellent place for the magazine to bring forward any evidence it may have.

SENATOR Bronson Cutting of New Mexico, who was killed in an airplane accident in May, 1935, was one of the ablest of the group of American progressives. After his tragic death, a spontaneous movement arose among his friends for a memorial to him of a character appropriate to his qualities and outlook. The group hit upon the happy idea of a series of memorial lectures to be held in Washington. With the financial assistance of his mother, Mrs. W. Bayard Cutting, these are now under way and the overwhelming success thus far achieved demonstrates the value of the plan. Dr. Charles A. Beard, Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia of New York and Professor Harold J. Laski are among the chief speakers already selected and others appearing at the early meetings were Senators George Norris and Robert La Follette and Edward F. McGrady, Assistant Secretary of Labor. Admission has been without charge but tickets had to be requested in advance. The response was so tremendous that it has been necessary to have each speech delivered twice, and even so, thousands of applications for tickets have necessarily been rejected. This is the more remarkable since every professional lecture agent regards Washington, the fountainhead of political oratory, as one place where the inhabitants can't be dragged to a public lecture. In the audiences have been noted some sixty representatives of seventeen embassies and legations, a thousand government officials, members of the House and Senate, and many students in Washington colleges. We can think of no finer memorial project for a man like Senator Cutting and we hope a precedent has been set that will be widely followed in other parts of the country.

RECENT information from Spain requires a modification of the statement regarding Miguel de Unamuno that appeared on page 94 of our issue of March 3. At the time of his death a few weeks ago Unamuno was in territory controlled by the rebels, and authentic information regarding his last days is therefore difficult to obtain, since all fascist news sources are entirely unreliable. Reports are in circulation that Unamuno turned against the fascists so completely that he was deposed by them as rector of Salamanca University, and it is even whispered that his death may not have been the result of natural causes. We do not know whether these things are true; but we do know that whatever enthusiasm Unamuno may once have had for the fascists had evaporated after his first-hand observation of their practices. Shortly before his death Unamuno was interviewed by the well known American writer and radio speaker, H. V. Kaltenborn. Even with a fascist military officer in the room, Unamuno did not hesitate to say that he did not wish to see Franco win. Neither did he, as has been reported, go over to the side of the loyalists. Old, tired and cynical, his attitude was "a plague of both your houses."

The Coming Boom

GOVERNMENT authorities have recently underlined the danger that an uncontrollable boom may be in the offing. President Roosevelt, in his fireside radio talk on the Supreme Court, spoke of the necessity for government to have the power to do something to prevent such a development in its early stages. The "silent crisis" of boom is no less to be dreaded than the crisis of depression. Chairman Eccles of the Federal Reserve Board also warned against current tendencies, pointing out that a sound credit policy could help, but is not all-sufficient. We need also, he said, to balance the budget, by higher taxation if necessary, and monopolistic groups in industry must refrain from boosting prices too high. The warning was reinforced by Secretaries Wallace and Roper.

Conservatives hostile to the proposed Supreme Court reform, who suspect this is a publicity barrage to uphold the President's hands, make light of the warnings. How is it, they ask, that the administration suddenly becomes concerned about the matter when only a few months ago during the campaign Mr. Roosevelt assured us that there was nothing to fear and the situation was in hand? And what would he want the power to do in any case that he cannot now accomplish? The Supreme Court does not prevent him from balancing the budget, whether by taxation or economy. It does not interfere with credit restriction, tariff reduction, return to the international gold standard or enforcement of domestic competition. The administration has for years been doing its best to get prices up and credit loosened anyway; if now at last its efforts are succeeding too well, it has only itself to blame.

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A look at the principal factors now at work will indicate that something more than this needs to be said. Commodity prices have been rising with extreme rapidity; and their rise has little to do with either credit conditions or governmental fiscal policy. Long depression reduced production and brought inventories to a minimum in many raw-material markets. When industrial demand revived, prices began to soar. In some cases this was doubtless the result of monopoly control—but not in all. The ordinary forces of demand and supply were at work. Speculation hastened to discount future price rises; and this speculation was not confined merely to market traders, but extended also to producers anxious to lay in stocks of materials before prices went too far. The speculation of course helped to sharpen the rise which it anticipated. Superadded to the usual forces of upswing came the heavy demands resulting from big armament programs throughout the world. We are already to a degree enmeshed in a war boom, but to how great a degree nobody knows exactly. Even if we discount the effects of armament orders, what is happening fits exactly the behavior of private capitalism when it revives from depression.

Balanced budgets, cautious central banking policy and the rest of the functions over which government has control have never yet prevented such a movement from going too far, once it got fairly started, and from breeding the conditions which make a recession inevitable. If, in addition to the ordinary play of demand and supply, the unsettling force of a war boom is also to be felt, the eventual recession is likely to be severe indeed. Without this continuing stimulus, high prices might more promptly bring their own correction through enlargement of supply in many markets, but with it no one can tell where the end may be.

The New Republic has from the very beginning of the New Deal expressed the belief that policies calculated to stimulate recovery, whether adopted by government or by private industry and finance, would be insufficient to prevent the business order from continuing its usual cyclical behavior. Booms and depressions are inseparable from private capitalism. Compensating and moderating factors may be introduced, but unless they are carried very much farther than this or any other government in a capitalist order has ever carried them, they are not likely to prevent the basic movement itself. The forces of profit-seeking business are incalculably strong and unruly; they do not and cannot pursue concerted policies well adapted to the general welfare, but act in a way that accumulates the pressures leading to distortions in the economic structure.

In order to see whether the government has the legal power to do what it would have to do in order to prevent the return of an unhealthy boom, it is necessary to have some idea of how the more important distortions arise. All authorities on the subject agree that a major desideratum is that the revival of demand should result generally in enlarged production rather than in too much increase of prices. But in a business order, increase of output and price rises are likely to go together for a while. Production may not catch up with rising demand in time to moderate the price advances. The upward tendency of prices then may become uncontrollable. Eventually it restricts demand. This distortion may be exaggerated where monopoly exists, but it occurs also in competitive markets. In order to prevent a development like this, government would have to exert a direct control over prices and production. Attempts to break up monopoly or to lower prices through tariff reduction, or to restrict credit would not be enough. The Court has denied governmental authority over prices in industry generally.

But this is only the beginning of the difficulty. In addition to the danger of too rapid a rise of the price level, there is a danger of internal distortions in the structure of prices, wages, costs and profits. Some prices ought to rise; others ought to fall. Investment in new capital equipment ought to expand rapidly in some industries; in others it ought to be restricted. We need, for instance, a lot of good new housing; we do not need new coal mines or new wheat fields. If we wait for the "natural" movement of prices and profits to direct our productive activities properly, we find that it does not act promptly enough and efficiently enough. Underexpansion and overexpansion of capital or durable goods succeed one another; we have either a drought or a flood in many industries. There is no governmental power to control the amount and direction of new investment, or the prices and profits which now influence investment.

Building is a very good instance of this type of maladjustment. It would have been logical and desirable if vast new housing developments had been undertaken during the depression, when prices of materials were low and heavy unemployment existed in the building trades. But of course this did not happen. At last higher rents are beginning to stimulate building, at the very time when prices of steel, copper, tin, cement and other building materials are soaring. Before the building boom gets fairly started, there will be an acute housing shortage and a boosting of rents that will induce far more new construction than can profitably be rented—at the high costs now necessary—when the new supply comes on the market. Then we shall have another building slump. This is one important instance of what normally happens in the business order. Government has no legal powers sufficient to control it.

We do not believe, to be sure, that Mr. Roosevelt has a program adequate to the task of taming a possible coming boom. But we are certain that if he did have such a program, the Supreme Court as at present constituted would say that the Constitution prevented Congress from enacting it into law. For the Court is very zealous in preventing governmental interference with the decisions of private business men about prices, production and investment—the very decisions that now determine what happens.

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The Sit-Down and Fascism

THE WAVE of sit-down strikes that has swept the country in recent weeks is attracting more widespread attention than President Roosevelt's proposals for reorganizing the federal judiciary. Conservative politicians and newspapers are vying with one another in applying bad names to the strikers who use this technique. We are told over and over that the sit-down is illegal, autocratic and brutal; that it is duplicating the conditions that existed in Italy before Mussolini's march on Rome and that if it goes on, it will certainly bring about fascism in this country.

The historical analogy, of course, is highly inaccurate. Despite the fond myth of American sympathizers with fascism, it is not true that Italy was in chaos when Mussolini seized power, or that he rescued the country from the imminent threat of Bolshevism. In other ways, too, conditions in the United States today differ so completely from those in Italy after the Great War that attempts at comparison are meaningless. It is well to remember that fascism is a phase of dying private capitalism, and that the process of death is hastened when employers try to keep the mass of the workers at such low income levels that they cannot buy back the products of their own toil. The sit-down strikers, in so far as they are successful in increasing wages and compelling collective bargaining, are helping to keep the capitalist system in successful operation.

Two or three other current misconceptions about the sit-down strike need to be corrected. It is not true, for one thing, that the sit-down technique is responsible for the current wave of labor troubles. It would have come in any case, as the workers seek to end the wage cuts and increases in hours that took place during the depression. As we have previously commented, when employers slashed wages or lengthened the working day, it wasn't news; but when the workers try, by the only means in their power, to remedy these conditions, it is hot copy.

It is also wrong to suppose that responsibility for the sit-downs rests with the CIO, or even with unions in general. Of the several hundred sit-down strikes in the past few weeks many have occurred spontaneously among unorganized workers, and many more in unaffiliated unions or those owing allegiance to the A.F. of L. It is a well known fact that even in CIO groups such as the automobile workers, it was the rank and file who themselves adopted the sit-down technique, and the leaders had to accept a *fait accompli.*

Justice Ferdinand Pecora pointed out an important truth the other day when he said that it was the forces of big business that first used the technique of the sit-down. From the beginning of the New Deal, large industrial and financial concerns have refused to obey those laws of which they did not approve. In particular, they would not accept genuine collective bargaining, either under Section 7-a of the NRA or under the Wagner Labor Relations Law. They have compelled their workers to use the only weapon at their command to obtain conditions supposedly guaranteed by acts of Congress.

As for the reputed illegality of the sit-down, we should remember that it is usually local police ordinances which the strikers employing this technique are supposed to violate. Local police have acted as strikebreakers for generations. Industrial workers have learned that the cops are their enemies. It is not surprising, therefore, that behavior patterns have been built up which cause a sit-down striker to refuse to come out of the plant just because one of the hated wearers of the blue uniform stands at the gates and reads aloud a court order.

Still more important, from labor's point of view, is the fact that the sit-down gives an effective answer to the tactics heretofore used by the employer. As the testimony before the Senate Civil Liberties Committee amply proves, the standard practice has been to honeycomb the union with spies, and in the case of a strike, to hire quantities of thugs, many of them ex-convicts, in the guise of strikebreakers, whose real function is to make war on the strikers—war that not infrequently has fatal results. The sit-down wipes out the possibility of this sort of strike-breaking technique. It does not, of course, entirely prevent the use of spies, but it makes their work far more difficult.

The outcry against the sit-down comes, 95 percent of the time, from those who have never in the past supported collective bargaining. They demand that labor should give up this effective weapon but they have no alternative to propose. What they really want is the open shop; what they really object to is the fact that the sit-down is singularly effective.

Those who make such angry complaint against the "anarchy" of the sit-down never mention the fact that any employer can save himself from a strike of this sort by entering into collective bargaining and establishing decent wages and hours. It is nonsense to say that nowadays, the employer can no longer have any peace of mind from one day to the next. All legitimate labor unions are prepared to enter into contracts providing that there shall be no sit-down or any other sort of strike during the life of the agreement. Such a provision is included in the settlement just made between Carnegie-Illinois and the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee.

Despite the hysteria of the daily press, the American labor situation has not changed in its fundamental aspects. The sit-down is an immensely effective form of strike, and is undoubtedly here to stay. But it remains true that any employer willing to give a square deal to labor can get a square deal in return. In so far as there is any danger of fascism in this country, those who create it are those employers, and their allies, who are willing to maintain conditions under which the standard of life for industrial workers is kept so low that they are in danger of becoming ready tools of any plausible potential Hitler who comes along.

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Experts on the Court

THOSE who have been led by the newspapers and the Bar Associations to believe that the President's Supreme Court plan is an attack on constitutional government and is opposed by all sound legal authority must have been surprised by the recent testimony in its favor. Mr. James M. Landis, who next fall will assume his duties as dean of the Harvard Law School, argued for it in Chicago. Mr. Edward S. Corwin of Princeton Law School also testified in its behalf before the Senate Judiciary Committee. So did Dean Leon Green of Northwestern University School of Law, Dean Thomas Francis Konop of Notre Dame Law School, Mr. William Draper Lewis, director of the American Law Institute and former dean of the University of Pennsylvania Law School, Mr. Justin Miller, president of the Federal Bar Association, and other authorities. These students have a close enough acquaintance with the actualities of the Court and of constitutional law not to be taken in by the myths which have been built up about these subjects in the popular mind. And, unlike the noted practising lawyers who, as counsel for great corporations, often take a view prejudiced by the interests of their clients, they represent more closely the public welfare.

While their points of view and methods of presentation varied, they were unanimous in the belief that the Supreme Court has been exercising political rather than purely judicial functions, and needs to be checked by modern political needs. Many of them thought that the existing Constitution would, without amendment, permit necessary social and economic legislation if it were properly interpreted. Dean Green was questioned by Senator Burke about his article in The New Republic of February 24, "Unpacking the Court." There he had written, "I suppose no one thinks that the Supreme Court is not a part of our government and not subject to political control, however remote." Senator Burke asked him, "How can you have a politically controlled Court and at the same time an independent judiciary?" Mr. Green's reply was, as quoted by The New York Times, "Of course you couldn't make the Court over every morning, but when the Court crystallizes over a period of years, showing it to be out of harmony with the other branches, it is not only the prerogative but the duty of Congress to do something about it."

The whole controversy reminds us of an incident reported to have occurred some years ago at a Washington reception. A young law dean was introduced to one of the reactionary Justices of the Supreme Court. "Mr. ——," said the Justice, "I understand that you teach the young men in your law school that the Supreme Court doesn't know the law." "Oh, no, sir," came the instant reply, "we let them find that out for themselves." The whole country is now beginning to find out what the experts have long known.

More Trouble for the Indians

SENATOR Burton K. Wheeler of Montana surprised and disappointed many of his old friends when he came out against President Roosevelt's plan for reorganization of the Supreme Court. He has now taken another action that has had the same effect, by introducing a bill that would repeal the present fundamental law dealing with the Indians.

Every well informed and impartial student of Indian affairs knows that under this law, as administered by Commissioner John Collier, the Red Man is getting the best treatment he has ever received. Opposition to the current policy comes from two groups: from religious bodies who object to the Indians' being allowed to live their own lives and follow the ways of their ancestors, and from white men who in the past were engaged in stealing Indian property, were making huge profits, and have objected to inteference with the process. In this latter group are many stockmen, including goodly numbers from Senator Wheeler's home state of Montana.

In the old days, they were accustomed to lease Indian lands at far less than their value, a process aided by the Washington authorities who obligingly chopped up the allotments in such a way that the Indians could not themselves profitably use their land. Stockmen, naturally, did their best to destroy the future value of the land by overgrazing and ignoring all conservation measures. Mr. Collier has made it possible for the Indians to amalgamate their holdings and use them, with proper safeguards against the destruction of the soil. Senator Wheeler's bill would bring back the old conditions, under the guise of breaking down the Indians' isolation and merging them with the general population, in spite of the proved fact that under such a policy the Indians are merely huddled into rural slums. We think Senator Wheeler owes it to the country to withdraw his bill and to explain why he ever introduced it.

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The Pinkertons Testify

THE SECOND phase of the La Follette investigation into civil liberties—the hearings of which ran through January and February—was chiefly concerned with three detective agencies, the Pinkertons, the Corporations Auxiliary and the National Metal Trades Association. It was shown that General Motors, during 1934-36, spent $839,764 on spies, most of it being paid out through the Pinkertons. In the single year 1935, the youthful Robert Allen Pinkerton, great-grandson of the man who guarded Abraham Lincoln, was able to vote himself $129,500 in dividends. That same year, Corporations Auxiliary, whose largest client is Chrysler, did a gross business of $518,215, and its president, Mr. James H. Smith, awarded himself a $75,000 salary. The gross income of the National Metal Trades Association was not revealed, but it was testified that, on January 15, 1937, the NMTA was "servicing" a total of 952 industrial plants.

The evidence showed that these three agencies have "hooked" literally hundreds of union members, bribing them for a dollar or two a day to betray their union secrets. Many of these "hooked" men gave their stories in pathetic, sordid detail. Other testimony, notably in the cases of the Columbia Enamel and Stamping company of Terre Haute, Indiana, and the Black and Decker concern of Kent, Ohio, purported to show that spies were deliberately used to bring about small civil wars.

On behalf of General Motors the Pinkertons placed operatives around the Alexandria, Virginia, home of John L. Lewis, head of the CIO. Pinkerton men "tailed" William Green, of the A.F. of L.; John P. Frey, of the A.F. of L.'s metal-trades department; Homer Martin, of the United Auto Workers; Ray Kelsay, of the Buffers' and Polishers' Union; Adolph Germer, organizer for the CIO, and a long list of lesser union figures. Corporations Auxiliary bought out the best friend of young Richard T. Frankensteen, Detroit organizer of the United Auto Workers. A high-up Corporations Auxiliary agent, masquerading as an elderly theatrical producer, played host to Frankensteen and his family at a Michigan lake resort. The gaudiest bit of "tailing" was done by the Pinkertons, who set men to shadow Edward F. McGrady, Assistant Secretary of Labor. When an operative was placed in the room next to Mr. McGrady's in a Detroit hotel, however, he overheard nothing. "Mr. McGrady mumbled," he testified bitterly.

But the part of the testimony most worth attention concerns coöperation among employers in the mass industries. It bears directly on the controversy between Mr. Lewis and the A.F. of L. reactionaries. This controversy, you will recall, had to do not merely with craft and industrial unionism, but also with strategy. Back in 1933, Mr. Lewis argued that the mass employers formed a virtual unit, and could be attacked only by a special, highly centralized labor organization—the sort of organization that the CIO has since become. The A.F. of L. leaders pooh-poohed this. They maintained that individual unions were entirely able to do the job, with sporadic aid from the ramshackle A.F. of L. They began to call Mr. Lewis "dictator" and "two-bit Napoleon."

Two of the witnesses before the La Follette committee were Messrs. Merle C. Hale and Harry W. Anderson, the former and present personnel officers of General Motors. Brief as their testimony was, Senator La Follette was able to establish the existence of a shadowy, portentous body called the Special Conference Committee, which meets once a month in an office adjoining the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, on the twenty-fourth floor of the RCA building in Radio City, New York. Twelve great corporations are represented on this committee. They are: American Telephone and Telegraph, Bethlehem Steel, duPont, General Electric, General Motors, Goodyear Rubber, International Harvester, Irving Trust, Standard Oil of New Jersey, U.S. Rubber, U.S. Steel and Westinghouse Electric.

Like most witnesses before the La Follette committee, Messrs. Hale and Anderson were afflicted with amnesia. They remembered little of what was done in the Special Conference Committee, and testified that they regularly dropped the resumés of its meetings into the wastebasket. They did reveal, however, a few scanty scraps of information. An occasion was described when the Special Conference Committee was visited by Mr. Walter C. Teagle, chairman of the Standard Oil of New Jersey, who spoke on labor policy. And with obvious satisfaction, Mr. Hale told of a small dinner at which Mr. John D. Rockefeller Jr. was honor guest:

> MR. HALE: Mr. Rockefeller Jr. was there. He made the comment that he had his son there and that he was looking forward to the time—he said, "In my father's day"—I remember that comment—"the man that could control money could control business." He said, "I am seeing money become more plentiful and I imagine in my son's day the man that can control men can control business." I remember that one particular comment.

In the last few days, according to report, the La Follette investigators have visited the twenty-fourth floor in Radio City and have uncovered important material that will be the basis for future Senate hearings. Pending these expected revelations, what significance can be assigned to the Special Conference Committee? Messrs. Hale's and Anderson's testimony indicates that the two most important personalities on it are Mr. Clarence J. Hicks and Mr.

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Arthur H. Young. Mr. Hicks was one of the early upbuilders of the YMCA; Mr. Young began his career by helping Mr. John D. Rockefeller Jr. establish one of the first and greatest company unions in the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company. Mr. Hicks eventually left the YMCA to practise his arts for industry, and likewise worked in the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company. Mr. Hicks and Mr. Young, at various times, were concerned in creating the International Harvester's company union. Still later, Mr. Hicks went to the Standard Oil of New Jersey as assistant to Mr. Teagle, and Mr. Young took charge of Industrial Relations Counselors, Inc., a Rockefeller enterprise devoted to the spread of company unionism.

With this as background, you must move ahead to 1933, when Mr. Roosevelt first took office and the NRA was born. By far the most important industrialist to volunteer his services to the NRA was Mr. Teagle. He became head of the NRA's Business Advisory Board and spokesman for industry in Washington. Mr. Hicks also moved to Washington, and was provided with an office by the NRA. The liaison man between Mr. Teagle and Mr. Hicks and General Johnson was Mr. Edward R. Stettinius Jr., son of the former Morgan partner. Mr. Stettinius was then also a vice-president of General Motors, in charge of labor relations.

Everyone knows that after the enactment of Section 7-a of the NRA the great corporations began to set up company unions wholesale. In the light of the testimony before the La Follette committee, it seems fairly probable that the Special Conference Committee was the agency through which this was arranged. At any rate, after Messrs. Teagle, Hicks and Stettinius had been in Washington long enough to realize that organized labor's first objective would be the steel industry, observe the moves that followed. Mr. Stettinius quits the NRA and becomes a vice-president of U.S. Steel. Mr. Young, perhaps the greatest company-union adept in the world, leaves Industrial Relations Counselors, Inc., and likewise becomes a vice-president of U.S. Steel. Mr. Teagle's man-Friday, Mr. Hicks, takes over Industrial Relations Counselors, Inc. U.S. Steel, which had never before been affiliated with the Special Conference Committee, now becomes a member. Heavy industry had its hatches battened down, ready for the big wind.

Mr. Hale's testimony before the La Follette committee gives a fleeting glimpse of the discussions in the Special Conference Committee at about this time. (Mr. Hale, it should be noted, was then Mr. Stettinius' assistant):

> SENATOR LA FOLLETTE: When the NRA was discussed, did you discuss 7-a any?
>
> MR. HALE: Yes, sir; yes, sir; we certainly did.

Now to return to the controversy between Mr. Lewis and his enemies of the A.F. of L., Mr. Green, Mr. John P. Frey and Mr. Arthur Orlando Wharton. The testimony of Messrs. Hale and Anderson leaves much of the activity of the Special Conference Committee shrouded in mystery, but it does establish that in the winter of 1933-34 the Rockefeller and duPont interests, U.S. Steel and General Electric and a half-dozen other great corporations were in regular consultation on means to cut down the gathering strength of organized labor. Messrs. Green, Frey and Wharton were all members of the NRA Labor Advisory Board, and had offices not far from those of Mr. Teagle, Mr. Hicks and Mr. Stettinius. They had the same opportunity to observe the steps that industry was taking that Mr. Lewis had. Mr. Lewis' diagnosis of the nature of the opposition that labor would meet in the mass industries was uncannily right, and the A.F. of L. reactionaries were hopelessly wrong.

Just as the existence of the Special Conference Committee seemingly explains the united front of industry against independent unionism in 1933, so it may also quite possibly explain the present, almost simultaneous decision of General Motors, General Electric and U.S. Steel to negotiate with Mr. Lewis and the CIO. Part of Mr. Hale's testimony, however, gives warning of industry's ultimate intention:

> MR. HALE: I remember the discussions on outside unions [by the Special Conference Committee] hinged around the point as to the responsibility of the unions, and that if unions could be responsible it might be a good thing.
>
> SENATOR LA FOLLETTE: Were there any who thought they could or would be?
>
> MR. HALE: No; I think we felt that if we could get something of the English picture of a financial responsibility, or something of that kind.
>
> SENATOR THOMAS: You would make the unions incorporate?
>
> MR. HALE: That was the question I answered.

The "English picture" that Mr. Hale mentions is presumably the Trades Disputes Act of 1927, more usually known as the Scabs' Charter, imposed on English labor after the 1926 general strike. Within the last week or two, an attorney for Chrysler has demanded that the United Auto Workers agree to incorporation. A cry for union incorporation has been raised by several manufacturers' groups. Unscrupulous, and wholly unfounded, rumors are being set afloat that Mr. Roosevelt secretly wishes "increased responsibility" among unions. It is worth remembering that this program was approved by the Special Conference Committee as far back as 1933. It appears to be a carefully prepared second line of defense.

Another section of the testimony before the La Follette committee—that concerning the National Metal Trades Association—ought to be even more embarrassing to the A.F. of L. reactionaries, particularly to Mr. Frey and Mr. Wharton. Mr. Frey is head of the A.F. of L.'s metal-trades department and Mr. Wharton is president of the International Association of Machinists. Their job as union leaders is to fight the NMTA. The testimony before the La Follette committee was a long, dismal account of union failure.

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The NMTA was revealed as a consumers' co-operative—a coöperative of the consumers of labor spies, strikebreakers, tear-gas and riot guns in the metallurgical and machine industries. A non-profit-making institution, it pays no taxes to the government. It exercises summary control over the labor policies of the 952 plants forming its membership. Plants are forbidden to enter into union negotiations. The NMTA maintains a day-to-day surveillance over the whole union field, and endeavors to smash unions while they are still in the organizing stage. When strikes actually break out, however, it is legally pledged to supply each affected plant with scabs and strikebreakers up to 70 percent of its normal working force.

An effort was made by Senator La Follette to connect the NMTA with the mass industries. Many of the plants belonging to the NMTA furnish parts, accessories, tools and special products to the automobile, steel and electrical industries. It was suggested that the real force behind the NMTA was the great corporations, anxious to ensure for themselves a smooth-flowing supply of materials. This thesis, it should be said, was stoutly denied by Mr. Homer D. Sayre, the NMTA's "commissioner." The fact, remains, however, that Mr. K. T. Keller, production chief of Chrysler, was revealed as a member of the NMTA's administrative council and active in its affairs.

Testimony showed that the NMTA, like the Pinkertons, greatly increased its business after the enactment of the NRA and Section 7-a in 1933. Two examples of the NMTA's methods were the cases of George Lichtenberger and Frank Schultz, or Wagner. Lichtenberger, NMTA operative 187, was sent to the Morse Twist Drill Company at New Bedford, Massachusetts, in April, 1934. About that time, the National Labor Relations Board held an election in the Morse Twist Drill plant, in which the workers voted to join the International Association of Machinists by 272 to 10. Lichtenberger acted the part of good fellow, took a keen interest in the union local, and rapidly became an influence in New Bedford union affairs. After a few weeks passed, he abruptly filed charges against Ferdinand Sylvia, the Machinists' district organizer, and W. E. G. Batty, head of the New Bedford central labor body, accusing them of embezzling union funds. Later the charges were disproved and withdrawn, but not until Lichtenberger had become secretary of the Morse Twist Drill local, and the membership had dropped from 127 members to 8. Lichtenberger also helped to destroy the union local in the nearby Revere Brass Company.

The story of Frank Schultz, NMTA operative 97, is similar. He was a member of local 101, International Machinists, at Erie, Pennsylvania, and a delegate to the Erie central labor union. His secret reports to the NMTA were read out before the La Follette committee, and they give detailed, boastful accounts of his anti-union activities. At meetings of the central labor union, he opposed low initiation fees, opposed federal unions, opposed industrial unions and the CIO. By one device or another, he succeeded in killing each plan proposed for organizing Erie labor.

Why was it that Messrs. Frey and Wharton were unable to take time from their denunciations of Mr. Lewis to clean up two such sore spots as these? During the La Follette investigation, it was discovered that Lichtenberger was well known at the Washington headquarters of the International Machinists as a labor spy, and had been exposed as far back as 1919. Several of the International Machinists' officers could have recognized him on sight, had they bothered to go to New Bedford. Schultz, at Erie, was an important regional official of the union, in regular communication with Washington. Surely an experienced labor leader, as Mr. Wharton undoubtedly is, should have smelled something wrong.

One of the witnesses before the La Follette committee was James Matles, representative of the Grand Lodge of the International Machinists in the New York area. He gave a dramatic, despairing account of his struggles against the NMTA, apparently without aid from Washington. From the moment a union local was started, he said, the infiltration of NMTA spies would begin. While he was on the witness stand, Matles learned, with horrified amazement, that A. W. Allton, president of the New Jersey conference of the I.A. of M., representing some twelve local lodges, was likewise a spy, NMTA operative 479. Matles, by his manner, showed what seemed to be sympathy for John L. Lewis and the CIO, together with an apparent lack of trust in his own union.

No equivalent testimony was offered concerning the Chicago area, where, until 1933, the I.A. of M. had its stronghold. But, to the Senate investigators, the Grand Lodge representatives in Chicago gave the same despairing accounts that Matles did. Messrs. Frey and Wharton were invited to appear before the La Follette committee, and declined to avail themselves of the invitation. Mr. E. C. Davison, vice-president of the I.A. of M. and mayor of Alexandria, Virginia, sat in the rear of the committee room and seemed disconcerted and unhappy.

If the La Follette committee's investigation reveals extraordinary incompetence on the part of the A.F. of L. reactionaries, it also underlines the extraordinary organizing ability of John L. Lewis. This was particularly true in the mountainous testimony offered concerning the United Auto Workers of America. Witness upon witness told of the disintegration existing in the auto workers' ranks before Mr. Lewis and the CIO offered them leadership and funds. Typical case histories were those of Dubuc, the "fighting Frenchman of the Wolverine," and Lawrence Barker, both of whom were "hooked" by the Pinkertons. Wholly lacking in the traditions of unionism, they were easily seduced by stories of "financiers in New York, who want to know about plant conditions." The Pinkerton agents impressed on them that all the United Auto Workers' officers

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were crooked, and were selling out their followers. They came to suspect everyone, and to spread suspicion among their union brothers. Dubuc, indeed, testified that a Pinkerton operative swore that Senator La Follette was "simply getting his." Barker told the committee: "It [espionage] is very effective, especially in the local to which I belonged. . . . One time at Lansing-Fisher, they were almost 100-percent organized. And finally it went down to where, as I said, there were only five officers left."

The Pinkerton records seized by the Senate investigators later established that these five Lansing-Fisher union officials, unbeknown to each other, were all on the Pinkerton payroll. One of them, besides being a union vice-president and a Pinkerton operative, also managed to hold a side job with Corporations Auxiliary.

The head of the United Auto Workers' local at Flint, Robert C. Travis, testified that espionage caused the membership of his local to drop from 26,000 members to 162. When the workers finally appreciated that they were being spied on, not more than twenty-five or thirty could be persuaded to attend the union meetings. It was hinted, but not confirmed, that a Pinkerton operative was among the Fisher Body sit-down strikers in Flint, last January, and brought out information on the sit-down strikers' leadership, morale and preparations for defense.

Perhaps the best illustration of the degree to which the nerves of the auto workers were affected by espionage is the outburst of Richard T. Frankensteen, organizer of the Chrysler employees, when he learned that the Corporations Auxiliary had bribed a brother worker to betray him:

> MR. FRANKENSTEEN: I think that men of the type of Mr. Weckler [head of the DeSoto division of Chrysler] and Mr. Keller [president of Chrysler] are worse than a dope peddler who sells narcotics to addicts. They go on and pretend to be decent citizens and hire men for spy jobs—the lowest criminals in the world. I want to tell Mr. Weckler we won't work in the same plant with labor spies.

More than a year ago, the CIO stepped in to back up the organizing efforts of the United Auto Workers. The effect, as shown by the La Follette hearings, was instantaneous and great. Men like Frenchy Dubuc and Barker were able to regain their trust in unionism, and to do important counter-espionage work against the Pinkertons and Corporations Auxiliary. Young organizers like Travis and Frankensteen had their first chance to show their mettle. The victories of Flint and Detroit were the result.

JONATHAN MITCHELL.

Return from the USSR

The material presented below consists of selected passages from the new book by André Gide which will be published in the United States in the immediate future by Alfred A. Knopf under the title, "Return from the USSR." Malcolm Cowley reported in our issue of March 17 that this book has made a tremendous sensation in France, where it has already appeared as "Retour de l'U.R.S.S." We publish these extracts from M. Gide's book for their journalistic interest and of course without endorsement of his personal judgments.—THE EDITORS.

THREE years ago I declared my admiration, my love, for the USSR. An unprecedented experiment was being attempted there which filled our hearts with hope and from which we expected an immense advance, an impetus capable of carrying forward in its stride the whole human race. It is indeed worth while living, I thought, in order to be present at this rebirth, and worth while giving one's life in order to help it on. In our hearts and in our minds we resolutely linked the future of culture itself with the glorious destiny of the USSR. We have frequently said so. We should have liked to repeat it once again.

Already, without as yet having seen things for ourselves, we could not but feel disturbed by certain recent decisions which seemed to note a change of orientation.

At that moment [October, 1935] I wrote as follows:

> It is largely, moreover, the stupidity and unfairness of the attacks on the USSR that make us defend it with some obstinacy. Those same yelpers will begin to approve the Soviet Union just as we shall cease to do so; for what they will approve are those very compromises and concessions which will make some others say: "There! You see!" but which will lead away from the goal it had at first set itself. Let us hope that in order to keep our eyes fixed on that goal we may not be obliged to avert them from the Soviet Union.

Resolving, however, to maintain at all costs my confidence until I had more to go upon, and preferring to doubt my own judgment, I declared once more, four days after my arrival in Moscow, in my speech in the Red Square on the occasion of Gorky's funeral: "The fate of culture is bound up in our minds with the destiny of the Soviet Union. We will defend it."

I have always maintained that the wish to remain true to oneself too often carries with it a risk of insincerity; and I consider that if ever sincerity is important, it is surely when the beliefs of great masses of people are involved together with one's own.

If I had been mistaken at first, it would be better to acknowledge it at once, for in that case I am

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responsible for all those who might be led astray by this mistake of mine. One should not allow feelings of personal vanity to interfere; and indeed, such feelings are on the whole foreign to me. There are things more important in my eyes than myself, more important than the USSR. Those things are humanity, its destiny, and its culture.

But was I mistaken at first? Those who have followed the evolution of the Soviet Union during a lapse of time no longer than the last year or so can say whether it is I who have changed or whether it is not rather the Soviet Union. And by the Soviet Union I mean the man at its head.

The Soviet Union is "in construction"; one cannot say it too often. And to that is due the extraordinary interest of a stay in this immense country which is now in labor; one feels that one is witnessing the parturition of the future.

Good and bad alike are to be found there; I should say rather: the best and the worst. The best was often achieved only by an immense effort. That effort has not always and everywhere achieved what it set out to achieve. Sometimes one is able to think: not yet. Sometimes the worst accompanies and shadows the best; it almost seems as if it were a consequence of the best. And one passes from the brightest light to the darkest shade with a disconcerting abruptness. It often happens that the traveler, according to his own preconceived notions, only grasps one side or the other. It too often happens that the friends of the Soviet Union refuse to see the bad side, or, at any rate, refuse to admit the bad side; so that too often what is true about the USSR is said with enmity, and what is false with love.

Now my mind is so constructed that its severest criticisms are addressed to those whom I should like always to approve. To confine oneself exclusively to praise is a bad way of proving one's devotion, and I believe I am doing the Soviet Union itself and the cause that it represents in our eyes a greater service by speaking without dissimulation or indulgence. It is precisely because of my admiration for the Soviet Union and for the wonders it has already performed that I am going to criticize, because of what we had expected from it, above all because of what it had allowed us to hope for.

Who shall say what the Soviet Union has been to us? More than a chosen land—an example, a guide. What we have dreamt of, what we have hardly dared to hope, but towards which we were straining all our will and all our strength, was coming into being over there. A land existed where utopia was in process of becoming reality. Tremendous achievements had already made us exacting. The greatest difficulties appeared to have been got over, and we entered joyfully and boldly into the sort of engagement this land had contracted in the name of all suffering peoples.

Up to what point should we likewise feel ourselves involved in case of failure? But the very idea of failure cannot be entertained.

If certain tacit promises have not been kept, what should be blamed? Should we throw the responsibility on the first directives, or rather on subsequent deviations and compromises, however explicable these may be?

I am setting down my personal reflections on those features of the USSR that are shown to visitors with pleasure and legitimate pride, and on those other features that I was able to see for myself. The achievements of the USSR are, for the most part, admirable. One sees whole countrysides that already have the laughing look of happiness. Some years ago, during my travels in the Congo, I refused to stay in the government motor car and instead tried to learn what I could by entering into relations with anybody and everybody. Will those who praised me then reproach me now for having approached the USSR in the same spirit and for not letting myself be dazzled?

I am not hiding from myself the fact that the enemy parties—those for whom "the love of order is confused with the taste for tyranny"—will try to turn my book to their own advantage. And that would have kept me from publishing it, even from writing it, if I had not remained firm and unshaken in the conviction that, on the one hand, the USSR will end by overcoming the grave errors I am pointing out; on the other hand, and this is more important, that the particular errors of a country are not enough to compromise the truth of a cause that is international, universal. Falsehood, which sometimes takes the form of silence, may seem opportune; persisting in falsehood may also seem opportune; but it grants too much to the enemy; and truth, even though painful, can wound only to heal.

Nowhere else is contact with anybody and everybody established more easily than in the USSR; nowhere else is it more immediate, deeper, warmer. Bonds of violent sympathy are formed at once; sometimes a glance suffices. Yes, I believe there is no other country in the world where one can perceive so profoundly and forcefully the sense of humanity. In spite of differences in language, I had nowhere and never before felt myself to such a degree comrade and brother; and I would give the finest landscapes in the world for that.

Of landscapes I may speak later on; but first I want to tell about our first meeting with a band of Komsomols.

It was in the train that was taking us from Moscow to Ordjonikidze (formerly Vladikavkaz). The journey lasts for days. In the name of the Union of Soviet Writers, Michael Koltsov had placed a very comfortable private car at our disposal. We were incredibly well installed in it—all six of us, Jef Last, Guilloux, Herbart, Schiffrin, Dabit and I, with our interpreter and companion, the faithful comrade Bola. Besides our sleeping compartments we had a salon where our meals were served. Nothing could be better. But what pleased us very little was that

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we could not communicate with the rest of the train. At the first stop we walked along the station platform and decided that the next car must be filled with particularly pleasant people. They were a band of Komsomols on vacation, setting out for the Caucasus in the hope of climbing Mount Kazbek. At last we managed to have the doors opened and, soon afterwards, we mingled with our charming neighbors. I had carried with me from Paris many little games of skill, very different from those that are known in the USSR. Sometimes they help me to get acquainted with people whose language I cannot speak. The young men and women set to work on them and would not stop until they had solved every puzzle set before them. "A Komsomol never gives in," they told us laughing. Their car was very narrow; the sun was particularly hot that day; piled one against another we were stifling; it was delightful.

I must add that to many of them I was not unknown. A few had read some of my books (usually "Travels in the Congo") and since, after my speech in the Red Square on the occasion of Gorky's funeral, all the newspapers had printed my picture, they had recognized me immediately and seemed very pleased at the attention I was paying them; but no more pleased than I was myself at the evidence of their sympathy. Soon a great argument began. Jef Last, who understands Russian very well and speaks it, explained to us that they had been delighted by my little games of skill, but now they wondered whether it was proper for André Gide himself to be amused by them. Jef Last had to argue that this little diversion served to rest my brain cells. For a true Komsomol, always ready for duty, tends to judge everything by its utility—oh! without being pedantic about it; and this very discussion, interrupted by laughter, was a game. But as breathable air was somewhat lacking in their car, we invited ten or twelve of them into ours, where the evening continued with songs and even peasant dances, for which there was room in our salon. That evening lives on for my companions and me as one of the best memories of our travels. And we wonder if there is any other country in which one can encounter such a sudden and natural cordiality, or any other country in which the young people are so charming.

Somebody told me that a group of French miners, traveling in the USSR and visiting a mine, offered out of comradeship to relay a gang of Soviet miners. Immediately, without taking special pains and without even suspecting it, they found they were doing the work of Stakhanovists. Thinking of the French temperament, of the conscientiousness and education of our workers, one begins to wonder what a soviet regime might yield in France.

It is only just to add that, against this dull background, there are not only the Stakhanovists, but also a whole zealous youth, keen at work, a joyous leaven working in the doughy mass.

This inertia of the masses seems to have been, and still to be, one of the gravest and most important features of the problem that Stalin had to solve. Hence the "shock workers" (*udarniks*); hence Stakhanovism. And the reëstablishment of unequal wages is explained in the same fashion.

In the USSR everybody knows beforehand, once and for all, that on any and every subject there can be only one opinion. And in fact everybody's mind has been so molded and this conforming has become to such a degree easy, natural and imperceptible, that I do not think hypocrisy enters into it. Are these really the people who made the revolution? No; they are the people who profit by it. Every morning Pravda teaches them just what they should know and think and believe. And he who strays from the path had better look out! So that every time you talk to one Russian you feel as if you were talking to them all. Not exactly that everyone obeys a word of command; but everything is so arranged that nobody can differ from anybody else. Remember that this molding of the spirit begins in earliest infancy. . . . This explains their extraordinary attitude of acceptance which sometimes amazes you if you are a foreigner, and a certain capacity for happiness which amazes you even more.

You are sorry for these people who stand in a queue for hours; but they think waiting perfectly natural. Their bread and vegetables and fruit seem to you bad; but there is nothing else. You find the commodities that you are shown frightful; but there is no choice. If every point of comparison is removed, save with a past that no one regrets, you are delighted with what is offered you. What is important here is to persuade people that they are as well off as they can be until a better time comes; to persuade them that elsewhere people are *worse* off. The only way of achieving this is carefully to prevent any communication with the outside world (the world beyond the frontier, I mean). Thanks to this, the Russian workman who has a standard of living equal or even noticeably inferior to that of a French workman thinks himself well off, *is* better off, much better off, than the workman in France. Their happiness is made up of hope, confidence and ignorance.

It is extremely difficult for me to introduce any order into these reflections, owing to the interweaving and overlapping of the problems. I am not a technician and what interests me in economic questions is their psychological repercussions. I perfectly understand the psychological reasons which render it necessary to operate in close isolation, to prevent any leakage at the frontiers; in present-day conditions and so long as things have not improved, it is essential that this happiness should be protected from outside influences.

We admire in the USSR the extraordinary drive toward education and toward culture; but the only objects of this education are those which induce the mind to find satisfaction in its present circumstances and exclaim: "Oh, USSR. . . . *Ave! Spes unica!*"

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And culture is entirely directed along a single track. There is nothing disinterested in it; it merely accumulates, and (in spite of Marxism) almost entirely lacks the critical faculty. Of course I know that what is called "self-criticism" is highly thought of. When at a distance I admired this, and I still think it might have produced the most wonderful results if only it had been seriously and sincerely applied. But I was soon obliged to realize that apart from denunciations and complaints ("The canteen soup is badly cooked" or "The club reading-room badly swept"), criticism merely consists in asking oneself if this, that or the other is "the correct line." The line itself is never discussed. What is discussed is whether such and such work, or gesture, or theory, conforms to this sacrosanct line. And woe to him who seeks to cross it! As much criticism as you like—up to a point. Beyond that point criticism is not allowed. There are examples of this kind of thing in history. And nothing is a greater danger to culture than such a frame of mind.

The Soviet citizen is in an extraordinary state of ignorance concerning foreign countries. More than this—he has been persuaded that everything abroad and in every department is far less prosperous than in the USSR. This illusion is cleverly fostered, for it is important that everyone, even those who are ill satisfied, should be thankful for the regime which preserves them from worse ills.

As a matter of fact, though they do take some interest in what is happening in foreign parts, they are far more concerned about what the foreigner thinks of them. What really interests them is to know whether we admire them enough. What they are afraid of is that we should be ill informed as to their merits. What they want from us is not information but praise.

Some charming little girls who gathered round me in a children's playground (which I must say was entirely praiseworthy, like everything else that is done here for the young) harried me with questions. What they wanted to know was not whether we have children's playgrounds in France, but whether we know in France that they have such fine children's playgrounds in the USSR.

The questions you are asked are often so staggering that I hesitate to report them. It will be thought that I have invented them. They smile skeptically when I say that Paris too has got a subway. Have we even got street-cars? Buses?—One of them asks (and these were not children, but educated workmen) whether we had schools too in France. Another, slightly better informed, shrugged his shoulders: "Oh, yes, the French have got schools; but the children are beaten in them." He has this information on the best authority. Of course all workers in our country are wretched; that goes without saying, for we have not yet "made the revolution." For them, outside the USSR the reign of night begins. Apart from a few shameless capitalists, everybody is groping in the dark.

Some educated and most "refined" young girls (at Artek camp, where only exceptional characters are admitted) were highly surprised when I mentioned Russian films and told them that "Chapayev" and "We Are from Kronstadt" had had a great success in Paris. Had they not been assured that all Russian films were banned in France? And, as those who told them so are their masters, I could see perfectly well that it was my word they doubted. The French are so fond of pulling one's leg!

In a circle of naval officers on board a battleship which had just been exhibited for us to admire (this one was entirely made in the USSR), I went so far as to say that I was afraid that people in the Soviet Union were less well informed about what is being done in France than the people in France about what is being done in the Soviet Union. A distinctly disapproving murmur arose: "Pravda gives us sufficient information about everything." And suddenly somebody in a lyrical outburst, stepping out from the group, exclaimed: "In order to describe all the new and splendid and great things that are being done in the Soviet Union, there would not be paper enough in the whole world."

I do not protest against the inequality of incomes; I grant that it was necessary. But there are means of remedying differences of condition; now I fear that a new sort of workers' bourgeoisie may soon come into being. Satisfied (and for that very reason conservative, of course!) it will come to resemble all too closely our own petty bourgeoisie.

I see everywhere the preliminary symptoms of this.[1] And as we cannot doubt, alas, that bourgeois instincts, degraded, greedy, self-centered, slumber in many people's hearts notwithstanding any revolution (for man can hardly be reformed entirely from the outside), it disquiets me very much to observe, in the USSR today that these bourgeois instincts are indirectly flattered and encouraged by recent decisions that have been alarmingly approved of over here. With the restoration of the family (in its function of "social cell"), of inheritance, and of legacies, the love of lucre, of private ownership, is beginning to dominate the need for comradeship, for free sharing and for life in common. Not for everybody, of course; but for many. And we see the reappearance, not of classes no doubt, but of social strata, of a kind of aristocracy; I am not referring

[1] The recent law against abortions has horrified all whose salaries are insufficient to enable them to found a family and to bring up children. It has also horrified others, but for different reasons. Had it not been promised that a sort of referendum, a popular consultation, should be held on the subject of this law? A huge majority declared itself (more or less openly, it is true) against this law. But public opinion was not taken into consideration, and to the almost general stupefaction, the law was passed in spite of all. The newspapers, of course, had chiefly published approvals. In the private conversations I was able to have with a good many workmen on this subject, I heard nothing but timid recriminations and resigned complaints. (Can this law be to a certain degree justified? At any rate, it was occasioned by some deplorable abuses.) But from a Marxist point of view, what can one think of that other, older law against homosexuals? This law, which brackets them with counter-revolutionaries (for non-conformism is hunted down even in sexual matters), condemns them to a sentence of five years' deportation, which can be renewed if they are not reformed.

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here to the aristocracy of merit and of personal worth, but only to the aristocracy of respectability, of conformism, which in the next generation will become that of money.

Are my fears exaggerated? I hope so. As far as that goes, the Soviet Union has already shown us that it was capable of abrupt reversals. But I do fear that in order to cut short these bourgeois tendencies that are now being approved and fostered by the rulers, a revulsion will soon appear necessary which will run the risk of becoming as brutal as that which put an end to the NEP.

How can one fail to be shocked by the contempt, or at any rate the indifference, which those who are and feel themselves "on the right side" show to their "inferiors," to servants, to unskilled workmen, to male and female hired hands, and I was about to say to the poor? There are no more classes in the USSR—granted. But there are poor. There are too many of them—far too many. I had hoped not to see any.

Add to this that philanthropy, or even plain charity, is no longer the correct thing. The State takes charge of all that. It takes charge of everything and there is no longer any need—granted—for private help. This leads to a kind of harshness in mutual relations, in spite of all comradeship. Of course I am not referring to relations between equals, but as regards those "inferiors" to whom I have alluded, the "superiority complex" is allowed full play.

This petty-bourgeois spirit, which I greatly fear is in process of developing, is in my eyes profoundly and fundamentally counter-revolutionary.

But what is known as "counter-revolutionary" in the USSR of today is not that at all. In fact it is practically the opposite.

The spirit which is today held to be counter-revolutionary is that same revolutionary spirit, that ferment which first broke through the half-rotten dam of the old Tsarist world. One would like to be able to think that an overflowing love of mankind, or at least an imperious need for justice, filled every heart. But when the revolution was once accomplished, triumphant, stabilized, there was no more question of such things, and the feeling that had animated the first revolutionaries began to get in the way like cumbersome objects that have ceased to be useful. I compare these feelings to the props which help to build an arch but which are removed when the keystone is in place. Now that the revolution has triumphed, now that it is stabilized and moderated, now that it is beginning to come to terms, and, some will say, to grow prudent, those whom the revolutionary ferment still animates and who consider all these successive concessions to be compromises become troublesome, are reproved and suppressed. Then would it not be better, instead of playing on words, simply to acknowledge that the revolutionary spirit (or even simply the critical spirit) is no longer the correct thing, that it is not wanted any more? What is wanted now is compliance, conformism. What is desired and demanded is approval of all that is done in the USSR; and an attempt is being made to obtain an approval that is not mere resignation, but a sincere, an enthusiastic approval. What is most astounding is that this attempt is successful. On the other hand, the smallest protest, the least criticism, is liable to the severest penalties, and in fact is immediately stifled. And I doubt whether in any other country in the world, even Hitler's Germany, thought is less free, more bowed down, more fearful (terrorized), more vassalized.

Stalin, in the establishment of the first and second five-year plans, has shown such wisdom, such an intelligent flexibility in the successive modifications that he has seen fit to bring to them that one begins to wonder whether it was possible to be more consistent; whether this gradual divergence from the first lines, this departure from Leninism, was not necessary; whether more obstinacy would not have demanded from the people a truly superhuman effort. But in either case, the pill is bitter. If not Stalin, then it is man, humanity itself, that has disappointed us. What had been attempted, what had been desired, what was thought to be on the point of achievement, after so many struggles, so much blood split, so many tears, was *that* "above human strength"? Must one wait still longer, relinquish one's hopes, or project them into the future? That is what one asks oneself in the Soviet Union with painful anxiety. And even the suggestion of such a question is too much.

After so many months, so many years, of effort, one had the right to ask oneself: will they now at last be able to lift up their heads? They are more than ever bowed down.

It is undeniable that there has been a divergence from the first ideal. But must we then suspect that what we first wished for was not immediately attainable? Has there been a fiasco? Or an opportune and legitimate adaptation to unforeseen difficulties?

Does this passage from "mysticism" to "politics" necessarily involve a degradation? For we are no longer on the theoretical plane; we are in the domain of practical politics; the *menschliches, allzumenschliches* must be reckoned with—and so must the enemy.

Many of Stalin's decisions—in recent times almost all of them—have been taken entirely with a view to Germany and are dictated by fear of her. The progressive restoration of the family, of private property, of inheritance can thus be reasonably explained; the citizen of the Soviet Union must be encouraged to feel that he has some personal possessions to defend. But it is in this way that, progressively, the first impulse is deadened, is lost, and it becomes impossible to keep the eye fixed on the path that leads forward. And I shall be told that all this is necessary, urgent, for a flank attack might ruin the whole enterprise. But the enterprise itself is compromised in the end by these successive concessions.

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To suppress the opposition in a State, or even merely to prevent it from declaring itself, from showing itself in the light of day, is a very serious thing; an invitation to terrorism. If all the citizens of a State had the same views, it would without any doubt be more convenient for the rulers. But in the presence of such an impoverishment who could still dare speak of "culture"? Without a counterpoise how can thought not incline all to one side? It is a proof of great wisdom, I think, to listen to one's opponents, even to cherish them if need be, while preventing them from doing harm; combat, but not suppress them. To suppress the opposition. . . ? It is fortunate, no doubt, that Stalin should succeed so ill in his endeavor to do so.

"Humanity is not uniform, we must make up our minds to that; and any attempt to simplify, to unify, to reduce it from the outside will always be odious, ruinous and disastrously grotesque. For what is so annoying for Athalie is that it is always Eliacin, what is so annoying for Herod is that it is always the Holy Family, that escapes," as I wrote in 1910.

"You see," explained X—, "it wasn't at all what the public asked for; not at all the kind of thing we want nowadays. Before this he had written a very remarkable ballet which had been greatly admired." ("He" was Shostakovitch, whom I had heard praised in terms usually reserved for geniuses.) "But what is the public to do with an opera that leaves them with no tunes to hum when they come out?" (Heavens! Is this the stage they're at? I thought to myself. And yet X— is himself an artist and highly cultivated, and I had never before heard him say anything that was not intelligent.)

"What we want nowadays are works everyone can understand, and understand immediately. If Shostakovitch doesn't feel that himself, he will soon be made to by losing all his listeners."

I protested that often the finest works, and even those that eventually become the most popular, were at first appreciated by only a very small number of people. "Why, Beethoven himself," I said, and handed him a volume I happened to have on me at that very moment. "Here! Read what he says."

"Several years ago I too gave a concert in Berlin. I exerted myself to the utmost and thought I had really accomplished something excellent; therefore I hoped for vigorous applause; but imagine, after I had given utterance to my highest inspiration, not the smallest sign of approbation was heard."

X— granted that in the USSR a Beethoven would have found it very difficult to recover from such a failure. "You see," he went on, "an artist in our country must first of all keep in the line. Otherwise even the finest gifts will be considered formalism. Yes, that's our word for designating whatever we don't wish to see or hear. We want to create a new art worthy of the great people we are. Art today should be popular or nothing."

"You will drive all your artists to conformism," I answered. "And the best, those who refuse to degrade their art, or will not allow it to be subservient, to defend, will put you to shame."

Then he declared I was arguing like a bourgeois. That, for his part, he was convinced that Marxism, which had already produced such great things in other domains, would also produce works of art. He added that what prevented such works from arising was the importance that was still attached to a bygone past.

His voice became louder and louder, and he seemed to be giving a lecture or reciting a lesson. This conversation took place in the hall of the hotel at Sochi. I left him without saying anything more. But a few moments later he came to my room and in a low voice this time, "Of course," he said, "you are perfectly right . . . but there were people listening to us just now . . . and I have an exhibition opening very soon."

X— is a painter.

When we first arrived in the USSR, public opinion had barely recovered from the great quarrel of formalism. I tried to understand what this word meant and this is what I made out:

The accusation of formalism was leveled at any artist who was capable of attaching less importance to content than to form. Let me add at once that no content is considered worthy of interest (or, to be more accurate, is tolerated) unless it is inclined in a certain direction. The work of art is considered formalist if it is not inclined at all and therefore has no direction (I use the word in both meanings). I confess I cannot write these words of form and content without a smile. But it would be more proper to weep that this absurd distinction should be a determing consideration in criticism. That it may have been useful politically is possible, but then stop talking of culture. Culture is in danger when criticism is not free.

In the USSR, however fine a work may be, if it is not in the line it scandalizes. Beauty is considered a bourgeois value. However great a genius an artist may be, if he does not work in the line, attention will turn away—will be turned away—from him. What is demanded of the artist, of the writer, is that he shall conform and all the rest will be added unto him.

At Tiflis I saw an exhibition of modern art which it would perhaps be charitable not to speak of. But after all, these artists had attained their object, which is to edify, to convince, to convert (episodes of Stalin's life being used as the themes of these illustrations). Oh! it's very certain that none of these people were "formalists." Unfortunately they were not painters either. They made me think of Apollo, who, when he was set to serve Admetus, had to extinguish all his rays and from that moment did nothing of any value, or at any rate nothing of any good to us. But as the USSR was no better at the plastic arts before the revolution than after it, let us keep to literature.

"In the days of my youth," said X—, "we were recommended certain books and advised against

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others; and naturally it was to the latter that we were drawn. The great difference today is that the young people read only what they are recommended to read and have no desire to read anything else."

Thus Dostoevsky, for instance, finds today very few readers, without our being able to say exactly whether young people are turning away or being turned away from him—to such an extent are their minds molded.

If the mind is obliged to obey a word of command, it can at any rate feel that it is not free. But if it has been so manipulated beforehand that it obeys without even waiting for the word of command, it loses even the consciousness of its enslavement. I believe many young Soviet citizens would be greatly astonished if they were told that they had no liberty of thought, and would vehemently deny it.

And as it always happens that we recognize the value of certain advantages only after we have lost them, there is nothing like a stay in the USSR (or of course in Germany) to help us appreciate the inappreciable liberty of thought we still enjoy in France—and sometimes abuse.

Sebastopol, last stage of our journey. No doubt there are more interesting and more beautiful towns in the USSR but nowhere else had I felt how deeply I was captivated, how lasting would be my affection. At Sebastopol, as at Sukhum or Sochi, though here it is less hedged round, less select, I came across Russian life and society in its entirety, with its lacks, its defects, its sufferings, alas! side by side with those triumphs, those achievements, that give mankind the possibility or the promise of great happiness. And as from day to day the light varies, so sometimes it softened the shades, or sometimes, on the contrary, deepened them. But all the darkest as well as the brightest of what I saw here drew me, attached me —sometimes sorrowfully—to this land, to these united peoples, to this unfamiliar climate which bestows its blessing on the future and in which who knows what unhoped-for flowers may blossom. . . . All this I had to leave.

And already my heart began to ache with another, a fresh anguish. When I got back to Paris, what should I say? How should I answer the questions I foresaw? Wholesale judgments would certainly be expected of me. How explain that turn by turn in the USSR I had felt so hot and so cold? In declaring my love afresh, must I hide my reserves and give a lying approval to everything? No; I feel too deeply that in acting so I should injure both the USSR itself and the cause it stands for. But the gravest error would be to link too closely the one to the other and make the cause responsible for what we deplore in the USSR.

The help that the Soviet Union is giving to Spain shows us what fine capabilities of recovery it still possesses.

The Soviet Union has not yet finished instructing and astonishing us.

Paris. ANDRÉ GIDE.

The Marshal and I

Marshal Rodolfo Graziani
Addis Ababa
Italian Ethiopia
Africa.

SIR: I have a complaint to make and I think it may legitimately be addressed to you. I say this despite the fact that I never met you in my life and it is safe to assume that you never heard of me.

I have been reading about the recent attempt on your life in Addis Ababa and also about what was done to the Ethiopians in reprisal. To be sure, no one knows exactly what did happen, since the censorship in Ethiopia is even more complete and effective than that in Italy itself. There seems no doubt, however, that at least 1,600 Ethiopians were put to death, to the accompaniment of what widespread terrorism and torture we can easily guess. It is quite obvious that many of these 1,600 were innocent of any complicity in the attack upon your life and quite possible that all of them were. The rule seems to have been to execute every Ethiopian who was found in possession of firearms. Since a large part of the inhabitants of that country have always supported themselves by hunting, for which firearms are a necessary tool, you could about as well have executed the entire population. Every sensible person knows that in fact what you did was to commit deliberate murder upon a large enough group, selected at random, to frighten the remainder of the population into terrorized inactivity.

A possible American parallel would be to suppose that the British had won the American Revolution of 1776, and had then proceeded, following an attempt (which may or may not have been genuine) upon the life of, say, Lord Cornwallis, to execute 1,600, or any other number, of the inhabitants of Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York or Massachusetts. There is, to be sure, a world of difference between the Ethiopians of 1937 and the Americans of 1776, but one parallel is valid. In every revolutionary home could have been found the musket and powder horn that would justify taking the householder out and shooting him.

I laid down the newspaper after reading of your pretty little transaction on the ratio of sixteen hundred to one and found myself shaking with cold rage. I discovered that I urgently wished the assassin had been successful and that you, and all the other Italian invaders of Ethiopia, were dead. That is what I want to complain of. You have done something to me that no human being has the right to do to another. You have taken from me a part of my own spirit. I have been dragged down at least some way toward your own degraded level so that I too have become a murderer, potentially and in my heart.

I think I can lay claim to having once been a reasonably decent, kindly person, just as I assume

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that you also might have been decent, kindly and a man of honor were it not for your misfortune in living in a time and at a place where decency, kindliness and honor have been—temporarily, I hope—superseded by other emotions and attitudes. I believe I might have lived out my life without holding such murderous thoughts as I now hold toward you, were it not for the sort of thing that you and others like you have been doing in the world these past few years.

I think these actions have been a mistake even from your own point of view. They have produced hunger and misery for your own people and for millions more in other lands who feel forced to imitate your insane policy lest they suffer the fate of the Ethiopians. But I am not complaining of your actions from your point of view but from mine. I resent deeply the fact that you and the regime you represent have been able to reach out across the sea and make such changes in my inmost self. Moreover, there is the best of reasons to believe that I am not unique in the alterations that have been made. Millions of others have been affected in the same way.

In the days before you and others like you came to power and with the Archimedes lever of your savagery so moved the world, I believed with my whole heart in peace. I held that there was never any dispute between human beings that could not and should not be settled by an appeal to reason. I felt that a resort to arms, even in order to redress a wrong, was a mistake, that it dragged the champion of right down to the level of his adversary, that, in the old saying, there was never a bad peace or a good war. Today, I find myself shaken in this former view. It begins to seem to me that to change you and your kind, to stamp out forever your doctrines and practices, may be worth any sacrifice however great. I realize the danger that such an effort would simply make me and my kind more like you and yours, and in the final crisis I have no doubt that I should recoil against my feeling that brutality must be answered with brutality. But what concerns me now is my present state of mind, the fact that you and your masters have forced me into such alien thoughts and feelings. I protest.

BRUCE BLIVEN.

Spring on Troublesome Creek

Not all of us were warm, not all of us.
We are winter-lean, our faces are sharp with cold
And there is a smell of wood smoke in our clothes;
Not all of us were warm, though we hugged the fire
Through the long chilled nights.

We have come out
Into the sun again, we have untied our knot
Of flesh: We are no thinner than a hound or mare,
Or an unleaved poplar. We have come through
To the grass, to the cows calving in the lot.

JAMES STILL.

Washington Notes

The Administration Fears the Hot-Money Wolves —Would Further Devaluation Help?— Isolationists vs. Internationalists

ONE OF the wolves now howling around the national campfire, in the minds of administration officials, is hot money. It keeps them from sleep at night, and has a steady, if seldom mentioned, influence on administration policy. In particular hot money is one of the reasons that impel the administration toward renewed disarmament negotiations with Europe. It is perhaps the most realistic element in the administration's peace program.

About six weeks ago, Mr. Roosevelt cheerily promised that something would be done about hot money. Since then, the British Treasury has "requested" English investment trusts and insurance companies to refrain from further purchases of American securities. This is the sole measure that has been taken. A great deal of the hot money in New York is labeled British, but it is doubtful if any sizable proportion of it represents funds of large British institutions. The label "British," in the administration's compilations of hot money, merely means that the money came here from London. Most of it is believed to be funds from Continental centers, and quite possibly it also includes funds of Cairo bankers or Bombay bazaar speculators. In any case, it would not be susceptible to pressure from the British Treasury.

The administration has in prospect a measure of its own against hot money, an increase in the tax on dividends accruing to foreign security holders. Such a tax is likely to be submitted to Congress in the near future. But few administration advisers are optimistic enough to think that it will prove poisoned meat for the hot-money wolf. A really drastic tax will simply give the foreigner a sufficient incentive to evade the impost altogether. Taxes on foreigners are extremely hard to collect. In our recent history, it was found that a capital-gains tax on foreigners was evaded in a wholesale manner. Then, too, a drastic levy on foreigners holding securities here would provoke official protests from foreign governments, and might easily lead to retaliatory taxes on investments abroad owned by Americans.

There seems to be no easy way to deal with hot money. What most of the administration advisers are doing, consequently, is just worrying. They are worrying a great deal. Out of their worry come diplomatic trial balloons with "world peace" or "world disarmament" painted on their sides. Hot money is not the only driving force behind the administration's foreign policy, of course, but it is an important one.

The Treasury looks at the hot-money problem in terms that ought to be unflattering to the national ego. The Treasury is chiefly concerned about the present inflow of gold, an inflow not caused by trade or "normal" investment. To the eyes of the expert, this inflow means that, at $35 an ounce, we have overpriced gold. We are buying something we do not want, and paying more than it is worth. We are the world's sucker. But there is no practicable way

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for us to stop letting ourselves be swindled. If we should lower the gold value of the dollar, wheat and cotton prices would go tumbling, all exports would suffer, and a heavy shock would be administered to our whole economy.

Besides New York, the other great world market for gold, at present, is London. From the expert's point of view, we could solve our problem by letting England bid higher for gold in terms of the pound. A pound worth $3.40 might reverse the flow of gold to this country; a pound worth $3.20 would certainly do it, at least temporarily. But this solution is also impracticable. Assuming that the British would be willing to risk the inflationary effect of a sudden lowering of the pound's value, experts here think that the chief result would be simply a new, frenzied rushing to and fro of hot money, accompanied by speculative attacks on the pound, dollar, franc and the remaining free currencies. The beautiful faith that the administration once had in international monetary management is completely dissipated. Many administration experts, in their more contemplative moments, will tell you that some form of control is necessary if international capitalism is to survive, and in the next breath will say that such control, at least for the present, is impossible.

The hope now is to lure the hot-money wolf away from our shores. If every nation in the world had a stable price level and could offer security for investment, presumably it would trot quietly back to its den of its own accord. Administration officials, it should be said, are delighted by the apparent success of Premier Blum's latest French loan, and the indications of increased economic strength in France. But this is the only bright detail in the European scene, which, as seen from here, is one of a crazy armament race, and a twisting of the normal productive process, as violent as that which occurred in the World War and as certain to bring eventual collapse. Even in England, this race is being carried on by budgetary deficits, and, while the administration stoutly defends its own deficits in the past, it fears them at the beginning of a world boom.

Mr. Roosevelt has eloquently set forth the dangers to our own domestic recovery from hot money. It is true that many experts doubt that the refugee money already in this country has had a decisive effect on our security or raw-material markets. But the threat is there. The Treasury, at considerable expense to itself, has acted to sterilize incoming shipments of gold. The funds represented by the shipments, however, roam at will in the New York money market, and are unlikely to be absorbed by permanent investment.

What is the administration to do? How can we protect ourselves? As long as we wish to maintain the present economic order, the only thoroughgoing remedy would be to bring about peace in Europe. From the expert's point of view, the next world war has already broken out. Many of the dislocations of trade and finance that accompany war are painfully visible, and in this war we find ourselves involved up to the ears. Officials of the Treasury and the Federal Reserve Board privately discuss the present situation in wartime terms.

Among many high administration members, you now find a curious oscillation of purpose. Most of them know that, in order to exercise genuine influence in Europe, we would have to give substantial commitments, perhaps of a military character, certainly of a financial character. We would have to enter into one or another of the two opposing European alliances that are now forming. The bare thought of doing this makes administration officials shrink. Most of them instinctively want to keep out of European entanglements, and know that, in any case, commitments would be politically impossible. But no sooner do they resign themselves to isolation from Europe than they come face to face with problems of hot money, currency stabilization and export markets. They begin to feel themselves internationalists, and to believe that this country has a mission to rescue the world. During the last week, under the influence of reports wafted northward from Mr. Roosevelt's retreat at Warm Springs, Georgia, they have been internationalists. A week from now, they will be isolationists. Mr. Roosevelt may propose a world disarmament conference, but he will do it doubtfully, and it will have only doubtful administration support.

Washington. T. R. B.

Other People's Money

Is the Present Recovery Here to Stay?—Investment Lags, Savings Gain—Financial Editors Play up the Bond Decline

IT IS interesting to find New Dealers, all of a sudden and in the very midst of the cheers for returning prosperity, stricken with certain terrors about the permanence of their prosperity.

One wonders whether these fears are the fruit of genuine misgivings which originate in the current economic factors or whether this is just a by-product of the Supreme Court fight.

In one of his addresses after the inauguration the President gave us to understand that not only had the crisis of 1933 been successfully met but that he had set in motion measures which would prevent any similar catastrophe in the future. At the time I wondered what were the measures which the President had devised which would produce this miracle.

Then when the Supreme Court fight got under way the President began to talk about the danger of another crisis and the fear that the Supreme Court would not permit him to adopt the necessary measures to avert such an event. Again I wondered what measures he had in mind directed to this end.

The truth is, in my humble judgment, that up to now the President has taken no measures to avert another depression. You might applaud any number of things he has done, but it seems to me that you cannot put your hand on any one thing designed to thwart the natural operations of the existing economy in its natural movement toward depression.

Because Marriner Eccles is an intelligent and realistic student of financial phenomena I believe his warnings are based on his honest convictions. And he has ample grounds for feeling alarmed. Nothing could be more unwholesome

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than the structure of the present recovery. Without going into any examination of the various theories of recovery and depression, we may be quite assured on this point—that recovery depends primarily on a continuous and rising flow of purchasing power into the system.

This flow of purchasing power comes from many sources, like many streams flowing into a great river. And it is possible now, with available statistical indices, to observe continuously the flow of all these streams. No one who faithfully watches this flow can fail to be impressed by the fact that the continuance of the flow is based upon very flimsy forces. It is easy to see how several of these streams might dry up very quickly.

At the same time it is possible to watch the purchasing power fed into these many streams and finally into the great one, drained off at many points into non-expendable pools; purchasing power routed into savings reservoirs where it is rendered inactive. Because, despite all the ballyhoo in newspapers, investment does hang back most sluggishly.

At the same time the dynamic power of this great stream of purchasing power is being reduced continually by the rise of prices in the retail markets. Simultaneously the rise of prices in the commodity markets is dealing the whole system a blow from another quarter.

All this leads to a possibility somewhat different from the fears of those who foresee inflation. The danger of a runaway market, a great boom followed by a great collapse, is what they have in mind. What is much more likely is that we shall see the collapse of the recovery before the boom begins.

One thing that may prolong it is the revival of the heavy industries and certain commodity industries due to war orders. No one yet knows the extent of this, but it must be very great indeed. But it is difficult to believe that it can continue for any great length of time without resort to external credits by foreign governments and this seems very difficult now.

United States bonds suffered a slight decline in the markets these last two weeks. More interesting than the decline itself was the glee with which conservative financial departments played up the story. The declines were slight but the incident was made the basis of a major financial yarn, as if some great blow had been dealt the credit of the government.

As a matter of fact the decline was, in the first place, no great shakes. In the second place, it was a decline of somewhat overpriced bonds to lower levels, but still high above par. In the third place, it is not altogether mysterious. At first I supposed that it was due chiefly to selling of bonds in anticipation of income-tax payments. Because banks have been allowing but small interest on deposits or none at all, many industrial and commercial concerns have been carrying current funds in bond accounts. The conversion of these accounts into cash to meet tax payments threw an unusually large number on the market and produced some decline. But there is, I find, another explanation. The one given above is sound. But this force was supplemented by another. Banks have been trying to thin out their bond portfolios. This is a wise policy. And as they have been doing this for some time they have been absorbing available bond demand so that when a small rush of selling came at the beginning of March the price was quickly affected.

Of course it does not mean that the credit of the government is affected as yet. It does mean that the government may have to pay a trifle more for money, but nothing else.

But I cannot dismiss the subject without adverting once again to the ill concealed delight of the financial editors in chronicling a break in the government bond market.

JOHN T. FLYNN.

When He Said Euripides

A LONG time ago, when I was a young college instructor, a rather older and grisly co-ed one morning rushed at me in my comic "office," heaped up with futile themes—fruits of a certain misguided English Department system that assumes authors may be made by a process of forcing uninterested but obligated students to write on How Mother Packs a Trunk, or A Day's Nutting, or even A Night with Robinson Crusoe. On such themes as these our college youth were supposed to express all the emphasis of passionate love repeated, and many other matters reckoned among thinkers and poets as dear to young life.

This co-ed's—what a sepulchral term it seems for her gray alpaca mass and vellum cheeks—mission concerned a young lady's failure on various crucial examinations, at the very time when she must indeed be graduated and pumped into a teaching position, or else, as they say, starve. "Professor Young," said the alpaca advocate, in a tidal sweep on my desk, "are you going to be just, generous and intelligent and pass this poor girl, or will you be unfair, prejudiced, mean and narrow, like some of her other professors?"

"Well," I said, "since you give me such an alternative, I'm going to be intelligent, generous, just, and pass her."

I had read the young lady's examination paper for my subject. There was certainly complete evidence that it was a case of now or never—she would not be better but might easily be worse. Moreover, I could see from my own lodgings her little house—in the hard dirt of whose distracted yard, flowers long planted blossomed far better than in my new tilled beds; and by night I used to hear her father coming in after some heroic carousal from which he emerged to make his way home. There his midnight homecomings used to be defended by one soul alone, a little terrier that met him at the gate, and barked all the way to the back door, to which his master, well past concupiscence, was not likely to be admitted; the porch was good enough for such as he. It seemed to me clear that, as an intelligent, generous and just professor, I should do what I could to propel a young lady from such poignant and *tenebrosi* surroundings into a more scholarly, high-school sterility, faintly informed and firmly entrenched.

I have often thought of this ancient, armored co-ed's challenge when letters have come by way of correction for one's blunders in print. It has always been, in such cases, a subject of wonder for me that persons evidently without cause for assault, take the sharp tone, grow caustic even, or sometimes deliver an ill-at-ease but none the less swift rebuke. It is as if some felicity of venom were invoked by the opportunity to administer correction or light. I recall, for instance, a note I had from a vehement objector to an expression I used in an article, an expression found in good literature for centuries but perhaps not the rule.

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(What rule?) This note said, "If you had any sense, you would know," etc. There was no way of telling whether the writer had ever seen a line of me before, or had merely been drawn to me at that very moment by the sheer stench of my sins. My surprise was in that huffy scorn.

It is curious how often I have thought of writing a little piece on the odd tone that correctors may take in their letters to a periodical. Sharp assault seems to be the note. For example, I got a letter from a gentleman whose father could read and write, was educated. The letter said bluntly that in view of an amazing statement of mine he advised my reading so and so. Why, I am sure, after years of seeing such letters, to me or to other writers, I should feel so, I know not; but I was, nevertheless, surprised at his not mentioning the fact that I had met his family, dined with them slightly, and so on, or at there being no way to tell whether or not he had ever read the book of mine in question. I still cannot imagine his not saying, "I read with interest your—etc. . . . but. . . ." Finally I reflect that the reason the early Christians were burned was not their faith so much as other people's sheer boredom with them and their aggressive rightness. I have never written the little piece on this subject, however, though if I had done so there would be instances in plenty.

"Is it not time you looked around and found that you are completely misguided when you say. . . ."

"As any street-corner policeman could tell you. . . ."

"After having read your inadequate and misleading essay, I write to say. . . ."

"Permit me as a mere outsider to suggest that the least bit of common sense would. . . ."

"Would not intelligent readers expect you to . . .?"

These were not all addressed to me, though the following was, apropos of a most harmless mixture of names, of two so-to-speak heroes in a popular bad play: "You blankety blankety (much more serious) blankety blank, we all know you have been in Florence, Italy, but—" Perhaps this is the museum piece: "What I read you for, and even like, is the unconscious autobiography. But I cannot forbear asking now what is your authority for saying—"

Sometimes the tone of the writer is merely that of academic scorn, freezing and far above anything like either writers' absentias or printers' mistakes.

As for me it is all a case of still the wonder grew—why should there be such acerbity of correction, either for obvious slips or for occasional errors? Why should the dislocation of a comma dislodge common courtesy? My own opinion is that this is all a matter of tradition; corrective letters have used this style, just that. For example, I once replied to a hot letter about something I had said on the Franciscan tradition, which, from living in Italian convents and from study of that beloved saint, I too knew. I accompanied this printed shot with a gentler letter by post, elaborating the same point. The very gentlest answer came, and some contrition too after finding me human. Is the human, I asked myself, only apparent in private correspondence? Almost any editor will tell you of mild answers to his reply to a branding bit of Sir: Your absurd remarks on— or Sir: Anyone at all literate could tell you that it was Mary Tudor not Mary Stuart—

Naturally I would know that Percy the son of Northumberland is not Hal, the King's son—as if the list of the *dramatis personae* did not provide as much right under my nose, and as if I did not remember how in school the prince was going to make a garland from Hotspur's budding honors, and Hotspur said he could no longer brook the prince's vanities, and my teacher said I would be kept after school till I learned these lines. But slips are human, and so I wrote "Hotspur" meaning "Henry." But the point here is that it was worth erring if only for the sake of getting such rare, such sweetly put, corrections as these two:

> Sir: Of the five centuries and more that I have spent in the heaven of defunct battle-heroes, twenty-five years have been materially gladdened by the periodical receipt and perusal of your worthy journal. In more recent times the drama reviews of Stark Young have contributed in no small measure to this gratification; however, when as fastidious a critic as this, in an otherwise well weighed critique of the current production of "Richard II," manages to err to the extent of calling me the son of Bolingbroke, I must somehow become articulate and protest.
>
> Bolingbroke was an overbearing tyrant, and emphatically not my sire. Just imagine the complications arising from the assumption that he was! Granting Stark Young's casual statement, Prince Hal, who made an end of me at Shrewsbury, was my brother, and I did valiant and assiduous battle, for several years running, against my own flesh and blood. History has given me the reputation of being hot-headed. It is this type of thing, gentlemen, that enhances this tradition. Please don't let it happen again; the boys up here are laughing uproariously at the predicament it places me in.
>
> Still your admiring, if hoary, subscriber,
>
> (signed) Harry Hotspur,
> (per) R. L. BLUMENTHAL.

And Miss Alice Hall (Box 373, Madison, Nebraska):

> Hotspur was Henry Percy, son of the Duke of Northumberland! . . . nickname suggested, perhaps, from "Percy." Stark Young seems to be the answer to King Henry IV's prayer: (at long last?)
>
> Oh, that it could be proved
> That some night-tripping fairy had exchanged
> In cradle-clothes our children where they play,
> And called mine Percy, his Plantagenet.

This of course is sheer mortuary fun; otherwise its Freudian nuances might make us all rather nervous.

All I can say is that such courteous emendation makes me feel that the corner policeman could not have turned quite the same trick, that the pedant's scorn need not be my portion, and that the writers of the two letters never for a moment suspected I had been in Florence, Italy. To reward such correspondents I will tell a story—not for the harsh correctors that I have cited, with the *dura ilia* (Horace) that are suitable for mowers:

It is said of the celebrated Spooner—see "spoonerism" in the Oxford dictionary—I twice dined (for our correspondents it must be said that this, of course, was when he was alive and, to be doubly careful, I was also) with him in Oxford—at any rate it is said of him that once when he had finished a sermon he dashed back to the pulpit calling out to the dispersing congregation, Brethren, when I said Euripides I meant St. Paul.

STARK YOUNG.

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The Bandwagon

Yet there is a flaw, which never is taken into consideration by the more impetuous backers of ultra-short hours. It is a flaw that cannot be brushed aside. . . . The inevitable result of too much spare time in the case of at least the majority of workers would be to steer them into the only diversions they know—pool, poker, drinking and petty agitation over fancied grievance. . . . But mass reliance upon them as outlets for using up waste time is unquestionably iniquitous because of its effect upon the work-sense of the participant.

It would be a tragedy to wreck the whole economic program for a few more "leisure hours"—that nobody would know what to do with.—*From an editorial in The Los Angeles Times.*

All handwriting is divided into two classes: the totalitarian (organic, flowing, well proportioned, "quiet" and pleasing); and the elementary (disconnected, cramped, jerky and inharmonious). The totalitarian is characteristic of Nordics and is due to an inherited superior development of the extrapyramidal nervous system found only in that race. The elementary form is characteristic of all non-Nordic races and denotes "motor helplessness." This theory proves the special position of Nordics in relation to all other races.—*Ludwig Krieger, writing in Zeitschrift für Pädagogische Psychologie.*

McNaboe Is a Horrid Word Too

I may be old-fashioned, reactionary and a Bourbon, but I say this word [syphilis] is not decent.—*New York State Senator John J. McNaboe, quoted in The New York Herald Tribune.*

So You Won't Talk?

"We do not intend to descend to the gutter where LaGuardia gets his expressions."—*From an article in Der Angriff, semi-official German Nazi newspaper.*

It is impossible to translate literally the Angriff editorials, as according to American usage certain expressions employed are unfit to print.—*From a news dispatch in The New York Times.*

Poochie vs. Doochie

The director of the publishing house, Albrighi-Segati, has been condemned to five years' exile because he declared in a private conversation that he loved his dog better than Mussolini.—*World Events, quoted in The Reader's Digest.*

Brotherhood-of-Man Department

I might mention that during one of the riots I shot a long-range projectile into a group, a shell hitting one man and causing a fracture of the skull, from which he has since died. As he was a Communist, I have had no feeling in the matter.—*From an affidavit filed with the Senate Civil Liberties Committee in regard to an incident of the California longshoremen's strike in 1934. The statement given is attributed to J. M. Roush, who was then an agent for Federal Laboratories, Inc.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column and $1 will be paid for each item used. Address The Bandwagon, care of The New Republic.—The Editors.

CORRESPONDENCE

Are Corporate Officers Also Workers?

SIR: Should industrial unionism spread widely, the question of the consequences to corporate control may well arise. At least 5,000 of the largest corporations are run by small coteries, ordinarily self-perpetuated in office by use of the proxies from the masses of dispersed stockholders. Often this inner group (the "control") may fairly be identified with the directory and general officers and, in any event, it almost always comprises the leading directors and executives. But the public view that the directory of a corporation is an agency of the stockholders is neither factually nor legally correct. A long series of decisions, in both state and federal courts, lays down that directors have, in general, power (1) to route earnings, (2) to allot participation in new security issues, (3) under some circumstances to alter contract rights of stockholders and (4) to classify new stock and reclassify old issues. In various companies formed since the War, such powers are explicitly granted to directories in the certificates of incorporation.

Craft unionism does not even touch this corporate situation. But industrial unionism seems certain to do so. A unified group of all employees subject to hire and fire confronting general officers and directors is almost certain, in the end, to crystallize the legal position of the latter group. Acceptance of the (highly dangerous) role of quasi-trusteeship for the dispersed stockholders or, on the other hand, some sort of unity with the other workers, clerical, manual and technical—are the alternatives. And despite old prejudices and present animosities, there exist strong economic reasons why many a "control" may take thoughtful consideration of the latter path: The resultant possibilities concerning capital set-up and some other corporate matters well deserve attention.

Winsted, Conn. Frederic Drew Bond.

Actualities of Nazi Persecution

SIR: The nature of the process of extermination to which the Jewish minority in Germany—never forming quite one percent of the total population—is subject is still not generally understood in America. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee has lately received information giving the results of the Nazi edicts specifically against the Jewish population.

The population of many small Jewish communities in Germany has shrunk by 50 percent. Some have been extinguished altogether. The number of Jewish children in East Prussia has declined by 65 percent since the advent of the Hitler regime. Of the 1,400 Jewish communities still maintaining a precarious existence in Germany, 276 are reported in dire need. The larger proportion of the Jews remaining in Germany are over forty-five years of age. In some districts there are no Jewish young people. In many communities there are only one or two Jewish children of school age, the others having been sent out of the country by their parents. Out of an estimated total Jewish population remaining in Germany of 409,000, some 83,761 by systematic persecution have been reduced to the status of recipients of relief.

In certain provinces of Germany up to one-third of all the Jewish residents are dependent on Jewish relief sources. In Posen, West Prussia, this percentage is 33.85, in Silesia 25.45, and in South Saxony-Thuringia, 27.63 percent. A group of communities in Hesse number 44.8 percent of their Jewish inhabitants among the utterly destitute. In January, 1937, the Jewish placement service, which has been struggling to find work of some kind for those ousted by the Nazis from productive careers, was forced to suspend its operations. The Jewish unemployed, thereafter, were left to their own devices.

Jewish doctors in Germany have been reduced in number from 6,000 in January, 1935, to 3,300, of whom most are over fifty years of age, with no new Jewish doctors being admitted to practice. Of the 350 Jewish druggists in Germany, 200 owned pharmacies, and these, by the law which prohibits Jewish ownership or operation of drug stores, are now obliged to sell or lease their pharmacies. Those young people who had been studying pharmacy will not be permitted to take their examinations.

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Following the logic dictated by Hitler, the Nazi regime denies that elementary rights at law apply to Jews. Denying Jews the opportunity to earn a living flows from the same principle. And this logic, prelude to extermination, is in substance and action without parallel in modern history. It is because of such conditions that the Joint Distribution Committee is seeking to raise this year $4,650,000 for aid in Central and Eastern Europe, which will include in its scope both the activities conducted in their own behalf by the Jews of Germany, and those in behalf of the tens of thousands of refugees who have sought and are seeking new lives in other lands.

GEORGE BACKER, chairman, Committee of Public Information, Joint Distribution Committee.

New York City.

Mr. Mellon's Trustees

SIR: The facts revealed by Congressman Maury Maverick in his speech on the bill to establish a national gallery of art (Senate Joint Resolution 73 and House Joint Resolution 217) are disquieting to all sincere lovers of art. It is proposed in this bill to vest control of the gallery housing Andrew Mellon's $50,000,000 bequest of old masters in nine trustees, four of them appointed by the President and five by Mr. Mellon. This board will be self-perpetuating.

The danger of the proposed set-up is that it places power over the embryonic national gallery in the hands of those who will naturally be sympathetic to the standards of the man who appointed them—Mr. Mellon—whose collection, while fine enough in the field it covers, does not pretend to any great concern for more recent art than the eighteenth century. Public funds will be appropriated to support the magnificent collection of Raphaels, Rubens, *et al.*, which Mr. Mellon has collected over a period of forty years. And control of these funds will remain with those who presumably will have no greater interest than he in the fate of the living artist.

Mr. Maverick in analyzing the dangers of such an arrangement pointed out that a democratic cultural plan should provide for at least the exhibition of the work of contemporary artists. No provision is made in the existing bill for this. The American Artists' Congress, protesting the diversion of public funds to private control and emphasizing the urgent need of more public support of the living artist, has offered an amendment by which three of the nine trustees would be artists, chosen from a slate elected by national artists' organizations. The principle of home rule is being evoked here properly. And all citizens with real concern for the future of art in America will support the movement to amend the bill so that control will be vested in representatives of the people and not of a private individual, Mr. Mellon.

PAUL STRAND.

New York City.

Righting an Academic Wrong

SIR: Your readers will be interested to know that a committee has been organized to sponsor an appeal for funds for financing Professor Arthur J. Kraus's breach of contract case against City College of New York, which is now pending in the New York courts. Dr. Kraus's case is in the hands of a capable and experienced lawyer who is giving the case the best of attention. Members of the sponsoring committee include Professor Arthur A. Brodeur of the University of California, Berkeley, Bishop James E. Freeman of Washington, Dr. Guy Emery Shipler, editor of The Churchman, Mr. George N. Shuster, of The Commonweal, and others.

Readers of The New Republic will recall that Professor Kraus suffered most unjust treatment at the hands of the authorities at City College four years ago when, following his hunger strike to protest against the persecution of students in Polish universities, he was discharged from his post on highly dubious charges of mental incompetence. During his hunger strike Dr. Kraus's classes were taken care of by substitute professors, and his heroism and courage in undertaking the strike were commended by his City College superiors. His superiors also invited him to return to his post after the strike. However, a few days after returning to his classes Dr. Kraus was induced to submit to a psychiatric examination, and the authorities used the findings of that examination to justify his discharge. Other prominent psychiatrists, including Dr. Robert W. Laidlaw, Dr. William Browning and Dr. Charles Rosenheck, have testified as to the soundness of his physical and mental condition.

Our purpose is to assist Dr. Kraus in obtaining a full and impartial court review of all the facts relating to his discharge, and thus to aid in removing the stigma of mental incompetence so unjustifiably imposed upon him by the action of City College. We estimate three thousand dollars will be needed for this purpose. We appeal to all who believe in justice and fair play to respond by giving generously and as promptly as possible. Gifts may be sent directly to the Secretary-Treasurer of our committee, Mr. Edwin C. Johnson, at Lester Studio Building, Broadway at One Hundred and Fourteenth Street, New York City.

JOHN DEWEY.

New York City.

From The New Republic Mail Bag

Some ingenious proposals and searching questions turn up in this week's mail. Samuel Redmond, of Brooklyn, New York, suggests to the British Labor Party that it start a nationwide drive to get citizens to pledge themselves "never to aid or fight in a war in defense of a fascist government." Mr. Redmond thinks the pacifists would come in on such a pledge, and the publicity would help to assure England's getting lined up on the right side of the free-for-all now brewing.

The question-hurlers are led by a professor at the University of Oklahoma who doesn't like the sound of the name, "Defenders, Inc.," listed as the organization sponsoring the recent Carnegie Hall meeting at which Senators Copeland, Walsh and Burke assailed the President's Supreme Court proposals. The professor inquires, "Who were the ground-floor incorporators? Is it possible this is only another alias for the Liberty League?" . . . Mrs. Sadie Isaacson of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, applauds our stand that if Leon Trotsky has documentary evidence of his innocence now is the time to bring it forward. She then goes right on past us to ask why Trotsky's son, Sedov, should choose Germany as his place of residence. It seems odd to her, but if asking such a question lands her in the middle of a controversy it won't seem odd to us. . . . Trotsky continues to be the center of lively dispute. The American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky sends us a copy of a letter from a group of nine progressive writers in Norway who denounce Lion Feuchtwanger for accepting the Moscow trials at their face value.

What's on the Air?

Representative Thomas R. Amlie of Wisconsin discusses the relative merits of "Constitutional Amendment or the President's Plan." Friday, March 26, 10:30 P.M., CBS.

Pope Pius XI celebrates the pontifical high mass and broadcasts an Easter greeting from Rome. Easter Sunday, March 28, 5 A.M., both the Columbia and National Broadcasting Company networks.

Senator Carter Glass of Virginia takes a full hour to express the opposition of the Democratic Old Guard to the President's Supreme Court plan. Monday, March 29, 10 to 11 P.M., CBS.

Announcement of awards to best programs on the air as chosen by the Women's National Radio Committee. Wednesday, March 31, 1:30 to 2 P.M., NBC-Red and Blue Networks.

Former President Glenn Frank of the University of Wisconsin and others speak on various phases of the question, "Is National Planning Inevitable?" at America's Town Meeting of the Air. Thursday, April 1, 9:30 to 10:30 P.M., NBC-Blue Network.

Outstanding musical events of the week include Richard Crooks as soloist with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra conducted by Alexander Smallens, Sunday, March 28, 9 to 10 P.M., CBS; the Cleveland Orchestra under the direction of Hans Lange, Wednesday, March 21, 1:45 to 2:45 P.M., NBC-Red Network; and the Metropolitan Opera Company broadcasting Wagner's "Das Rheingold" from the Boston Opera House, Saturday, April 3, 2 to 4:30 P.M., NBC-Red Network.

All times given are Eastern Standard.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Stations of the Cross

ONE TAKES for granted that the personality and writings of Father Hopkins, both highly original and independent, are today known to readers of modern poetry and that he needs no introduction. His fame has been perhaps a trifle overspecialized and his influence abused by those who are not equal to his own precepts—that true originality must be honored by true originality, not by imitation.

"The Notebooks and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins"[1] is the latest volume in the growing series of letters and manuscripts that have been collected and edited with such scholarly care since the reprint of the "Poems" in 1930. Among the material reproduced here, most of which is available for the first time, are extracts from the undergraduate diaries 1862-66, student essays, the Journal of the years 1868-75, lecture notes on rhetoric, several sermons and other writings done in his busy life as priest. Ample notes, appendices, maps and indices give proof of the painstaking attention and detail with which the volume was prepared by Mr. Humphrey House.

The early diaries contain poems, or drafts of poems, that Hopkins thought he had destroyed; they are important chiefly as throwing more light upon a youthful ease of manner that gave not much prophecy of the extremes of style afterwards developed. There is very little that is spiritually revealing either in the undergraduate diaries or in the Journal. Hopkins crossed out moral and spiritual notes in the diary from the end of March, 1865, on. These excisions, though still legible, have been respected because of "various interested people." Admitting the indubitable place of reticence and delicacy in the editing of such a point, it still must be considered a loss. The greater loss, however, and one that we can evidently never hope to see repaired, is what he called "my meditation papers," written concurrently with the Journal. No trace of these is known. Therefore we must rely upon infrequent remarks of a personal or emotional kind and upon the sermons and the letters of a later date if we are looking for more knowledge of his subjective life as convert and priest and the spiritual and religious crisis he experienced. We must, at a critical date in the diaries, be content with such meager notes as "March 12, 1865. A day of the great mercy of God." And "I confessed on Saturday, Lady Day, March 25." It was in this month that the religious decision occurred which led to his conversion. Beyond such dramatic but gnomic entries we have here no autobiographical references to the most compelling and momentous act of his life. It would seem possible that Hopkins himself, since he took the precaution to write them separately, might have destroyed the meditation papers.

Some of the Journal is lost. It ends with an unfinished sentence. Written with care, usually expanded from notes taken beforehand, it covers the years of his life twenty-four to thirty-one. Both as document and literature it is the most significant remains in the volume. What exists is printed in full. Antedating many of the letters now known, it provides earlier proof of a mind at once so objective and intuitive that the act of observing becomes the act of unveiling, like stripping light to its filament. This is especially true in Hopkins' gift for piercing and magnetic descriptions of nature, a hunger of mind and eye that consume what they hang on, a continual agitation of the faculties to identify themselves with matter—

> Bright, with a high wind blowing the crests of the trees before the sun and fetching in the blaze and dousing it again. In particular there was one light raft of beech which the wind footed and strained on, ruffling the leaves which came out in their triplets threaded round with a bright brim like an edge of white ice, the sun sitting at one end of the branch in a pash of soapsud-colored gummy bimbeams rowing over the leaves but sometimes flaring out so as to let a blue crust or platter from quite the quick of the orb sail in the eye.

In the Journal we see the variousness and humanity of his character. He followed political events, he was interested in colloquialisms of speech, he mesmerized a duck (for scientific purposes), he observed "how river billows all look back," he wept during the reading of passages from Sister Emmerich, he took notes on the parts of a plow and terms used in weaving, he got chilblains in May, he talked too freely and unkindly and did penance, he records that "Bridges came over and Rover bit him," he set down a great deal on architecture, he finds the design on the ceiling of the nave of Ely Cathedral "babyishly archaic." His use of the words "inscape" and "instress," so typical of his writing, increases as the Journal proceeds. Inscape seems definitely to be related to the artist's sense of form, and instress is a word for emotional response. "I felt a certain awe and instress, a feeling of strangeness."

In addition to the decoration that accompanied "A Vision of the Mermaids" we have now an opportunity in this volume to judge of other drawings by Hopkins. They show a strong and pleasing sense of design (or inscape), notably in "At the Baths of Rosenlaui."

After reading the "Comments on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola," the non-theological reader of today faces a perplexity in accommodating the opposed elements in Hopkins' mind, the scientific and the naïve. It is true that the preceding sermons are composed with a charm, a warmth and an order that make them thoroughly appealing. But that the rare refinements of his thought should have been used so wholeheartedly by him in expounding incredible sacred dates—the Holy Ghost or new Paraclete came to earth at nine o'clock in the morning fifty days after the Crucifixion—seems itself a bizarre legend. That the brilliant grasp of his mind should have been involved for page upon page with the subtleties and anticlimaxes of venial sin seems now a profound waste of important virtues: virtues that Father Hopkins possessed in remarkable quantity—intellect, taste, creative will, independence. One may regret that his chosen way of life, a dedication that gave deep impulse to his character and his writing, was yet such as to cause a grave division in his creative powers. The loss of manuscript to fire or dust or the reticence of relatives is not the only loss to be recorded and deplored. The poet inevitably lost something to the priest.

HILDEGARDE FLANNER.

[1] The Notebooks and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins, edited by Humphrey House. New York: The Oxford University Press. 510 pages. $8.50.

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Labor Union City

American City: A Rank and File History, by Charles Rumford Walker. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 295 pages. $2.50.

MR. CHARLES RUMFORD WALKER has some curious ideas. He does not believe that a city consists of its buildings, parks and subways. It consists, he thinks, of its citizens. Not its "leading citizens," who monopolize the customary town histories with sketches written, and paid for, by the happy recipients of the honor; not these, but all the citizenry constitute a city in Mr. Walker's eyes. With such novel ideas, he has written a startling book, which everyone who wishes to understand America should read.

His "rank and file history," as its subtitle runs, deals with Minneapolis. Why the author has chosen Minneapolis will appear shortly. Typically American in its rapid development from trading post, logging camp, mill town, to a metropolis, all in seventy-five years, Minneapolis has always preserved the appearance of a peculiarly democratic city. The gentry have preferred to live across the river in the "twin-city" of St. Paul—originally the larger but outdistanced in the nineties—a respectable town of bankers, lawyers and gangsters. Minneapolis, despite its broad avenues and lawns, its aristocratic Lake Minnetonka and patrician Minneapolis Club, is built upon the market-place where booted farmers sell, or try to sell, their produce, and where in the spring of 1934 shirt-sleeved workers put to flight a double army of police and vigilantes in the celebrated "Battle of Deputies Run."

A city of workers fed directly by the farmers—but ruled, until recently, by neither. A Scandinavian city governed autocratically by descendants of New Englanders, dyed-in-the-wool believers in the profit system, a long succession of timber barons, railroad barons, flour barons, who exploited the workers through low wages and the farmers through exorbitant freight rates and false scales.

The farmers rebelled long ago. Their fifty years of insurgency, expressed through the Anti-Monopoly Party, the Farmers' Alliance, the People's Party and the Non-Partisan League, at last attained moderate political success in the governorship of Floyd Olson, representative of the Farmer-Labor Party. But political success is one thing; economic change another. Floyd Olson's heart was with the people; he was bold in speech; but in action he was a trimmer. (All this, according to Mr. Walker's careful study.) The Citizens' Alliance still ruled Minneapolis and kept it a non-union town.

Then came the epochal year of 1934. The truck-drivers' strike for union recognition (won in May but resumed in July after the employers had broken their agreements) was something new in the class struggle: the strike of a union that was equally well organized for peace or war. The employers, refusing to negotiate, chose war, and lived to regret it. The union, led by the extraordinary Dunne brothers, showed marvelous discipline, efficiency and courage. The strikers had their own kitchen, dining-room, auditorium, hospital and machine shop; they published their own daily newspaper; several hundred men were always on call at strike headquarters, ready for every emergency; each picket line was in constant telephone communication with headquarters; a special corps of motorcyclists inspected the lines and reported the moves of the enemy.

The employers' Citizens' Alliance did not know where to turn. When it resorted to the usual "red scare" in the press, this was answered by stinging satire in The Northwest Organizer. When it resorted to violence, the Lions, Rotarians and Kiwanians of its vigilante battalions were routed by the clubs of the truck-drivers. The strike, like others, had its martyrs—two men shot in the back and killed—but it was won, in fact twice won. It had some help from Olson, some from Washington, but the victory was mainly due to the skill and determination of the strikers themselves. Other equally successful strikes followed in '35 and '36. "Open-shop Minneapolis" is now a union city.

In Minneapolis, the employers had a monopoly of money but the workers had a monopoly of intelligence. Once this becomes true everywhere, the outcome of the class struggle will not be doubtful. That is why Mr. Walker considers Minneapolis such a flaming portent of approaching social change.

ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES.

Dulce et Decorum Est

None Shall Look Back, by Caroline Gordon. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.75.

FONTAINE ALLARD, tobacco planter, slave holder full of cares and responsibilities, an old man walking in a part of his Kentucky woods, "had a strange feeling, as if a voice said to him, 'these are your father's and your fathers' before him' . . . he had actually for a moment been overcome by his attachment for that earth, those trees." This is in the beginning of "None Shall Look Back." Toward the end, his son Ned returns from the lost war, a skeleton, a dying man. "The land's still there, I reckon," he says, and goes back to it, hoping to live, but certain at least that he shall die there, where he belongs, unchanged in his belief in the way of life he had fought for.

His brother Jim, unfit for war, had stayed at home and profited by the changing times, taking advantage of his chances with the rising merchants and industrialists. Alienated, hostile, secretly hoping that Ned may die, he watches him go, a breathing reproach, supported by two women of his family. Miss Gordon makes it quite clear, in this short bitter scene, that Jim is the truly defeated man, the lost soul who thinks nothing is worth fighting for, who sets himself to survive and profit meanly by whatever occasion offers him.

This form of opportunism is sometimes at present called "interpreting history correctly"—that is, having the foresight to get on the bandwagon and make the most of the parade. With such shabbiness Miss Gordon has nothing to do. Her story is a legend in praise of heroes, of those who fought well and lost their battle, and their lives. It seems fresh and timely at this moment when we have before our eyes the spectacle of a death-dedicated people holding out in a struggle against overwhelming odds. Of all human impulses, that of heroism changes least in its character and shape, from one epoch to another. He is forever the same, then and forever unanswerable, the man who throws his life away as if he hated living, in defense of the one thing, whatever it may be, that he cares to live for. Causes change perpetually, die, go out of fashion, are superseded according to shifting political schemes, economics, religions, but the men ready to die for them are reborn again and again, always the same men.

Miss Gordon's heart is fixed on the memory of those men who died in a single, superbly fought lost cause, in nothing diminished for being lost, and this devotion has focused her feelings and imagination to a point of fire. She states clearly in every line of her story her mystical faith

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that what a man lives by, he must if the time comes, die for; to live beyond or to acknowledge defeat is to die twice, and shamefully. The motive of this faith is the pride of Lucifer, and Miss Gordon makes no pretense, either for herself or for her characters, to the maudlin virtue of humility in questions of principle.

All-seeing as an ancient chronicler, she has created a panorama of a society engaged in battle for its life. The author moves about, a disembodied spectator timing her presence expertly, over her familiar territory, Kentucky, Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi. Time, 1860 to 1864, dates which are, after 1776, the most portentous in the history of this country. Having chosen to observe from all points of view, rather than to stand on a knoll above the battle and watch a set procession of events through a field glass, she makes her scenes move rapidly from Federal lines to Confederate, from hospitals to prisons, to the plantations; the effect could easily have become diffuse without firm handling, and the central inalterable sympathies of the chronicler herself. She might have done the neat conventional thing, and told her story through the adventures of her unlucky young pair of lovers, Lucy Churchill and her cousin, Rives Allard. But they take their proper places in the midst of a tragedy of which their own tragedy is only a part. I know of nothing more humanly touching and immediate than the story of the brief, broken marriage of Rives and Lucy; but the book is not theirs, nor was it meant to be. Rives goes to die as a scout for Nathan Bedford Forrest, that unaccountable genius of war, who remained a mystery and a figure of legend even to his own soldiers, those who knew him best. There is no accounting for Forrest and Miss Gordon does not attempt the impossible. He remains what he was, a hero and a genius.

The Allard family is a center, or rather, a point of departure and return: in the beginning they are clearly seen, alive, each one a human being with his individual destiny, which gradually is merged with the destiny of his time and place. Their ends are symbolically exact: the old man lapses into the escape of imbecility, the old mother into perpetual blind grief, Rives into death in battle, Jim into moral dry rot, Lucy into numbness. In the meantime, we have seen them as they were born to be, busy with the full rich occupations of family life, the work of the plantation, the unpretentious gayety. Life for the Kentucky planters was never so grand as it was in Virginia and Louisiana, or even in Mississippi, with its slightly parvenu manners, if one takes Mr. Stark Young's account at face value. The Kentucky planters were down-to-earth men, and the most tenderly bred women were not above taking a hand in the cookery. They much more resembled Madame Washington than they did Mr. Young's jewelry-conscious belles. This tone is here, properly; it pervades the book like a fresh aroma of green woods and plowed fields.

This seems to me in a great many ways a better book than "Penhally" or "Aleck Maury, Sportsman," Miss Gordon's other two novels. The good firm style, at once homely, rhythmical and distinguished, is in all three of them, but at its best, so far, in "None Shall Look Back." It is true I know her story by heart, but I have never heard it told better. The effect is of brilliant, instant life; there is a clear daylight over a landscape I need not close my eyes to see, peopled with figures I know well. I have always known the end, as I know the end of so many tales of love, and heroism, and death. In this retelling, it all happened only yesterday. Those men on the field are not buried yet, those women have just put on their mourning.

KATHERINE ANNE PORTER.

Herndon's Story

Let Me Live: The Autobiography of Angelo Herndon. New York: Random House. $2.50.

MORE THAN any person except the Scottsboro boys, Angelo Herndon has focused attention upon the plight of the Negro in the South. One need not share his political beliefs (as I do not) to appreciate the importance of his service or to feel that the twenty-year sentence imposed upon him in Georgia is one of the most tragic brutalizations of justice in our history. This sentence, handed down on the basis of an ancient statute designed to prevent slave insurrections, has made Herndon a symbol—and his autobiography has been written, I would say unfortunately, with this symbolism in the forefront of his mind.

I do not mean to say that Mr. Herndon writes with any arrogance or trades upon his prominence in any way. What I do mean to say is that Mr. Herndon has written into his book more of his political convictions than the experience of his life—and we are the poorer because of it. "Let Me Live" is important in that it tells us what an American Negro who is a Communist, thinks. I think it could have been far more important if it had told us what an American Negro, who became a Communist, *feels:* not as a member of any party, but as a human being.

The objection can be made at this point that I am suggesting an impossible separation: that a deep, almost religious belief, lying at the very core of a man's life, must be the determining factor in all he does and thinks: coloring all his hopes and dreams and loves and fears. What I am suggesting, however, is not a separation but a merging—a merging of intellect and feeling, of head and heart. The quality I find lacking in Mr. Herndon's autobiography is precisely the quality we might logically expect it to have—that of emotion. Mr. Herndon, with the Scottsboro boys, has become the symbol of the oppressed American Negro. I wish that in writing this book he had also become his voice—not a voice leading him to any particular political salvation, simply a voice.

How many books have been written about the American Negro I don't know. Certainly I have read more than my share of them: and in all that reading, in all those swarms of words, I have not found (with the exception of a few short pieces in Mr. Jean Toomer's "Cane" and some of the poetry of Mr. Langston Hughes and Mr. Sterling Brown) a single book—I almost said page—that was deeply and truly and passionately felt: felt, I mean, in the way that Gorky's books were felt: Gorky who in one short story of ten pages could write a bitter indictment of the whole Tsarist regime without using one convenient phrase or one single political cliché.

It would indeed be stupid of me, as I hear somebody saying, to expect Mr. Herndon, who is twenty-four, to write like Gorky. Emotion, however, this simple thing of feeling something very deeply, has nothing to do with age. I do not want Mr. Herndon to write like Gorky or anybody else. All I want is for somebody in this country to write a deeply felt and deeply experienced book about our American life as it looks through a Negro's eyes. Mr. Herndon has the material for such a book and it could have been very beautiful and bitter and eloquent and fine. The book he has given us is certainly not without merit. It is valuable for its complete exposition of the Herndon trial if for nothing else. I simply feel that the author has not made full use of his experience.

HAMILTON BASSO.

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Physician, Heal the World!

Security Against Sickness, by I. S. Falk. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. 436 pages. $4.

DR. FALK has written an important book. Its subject, health insurance, is an essential part of every social-security program and is especially important in the United States—both because sickness ordinarily constitutes our chief cause of poverty, and because health insurance can be extended most quickly and to the greatest number. Moreover, despite the fact that the movement for health insurance antedates those for old-age and unemployment insurance, this very serious hazard has been completely omitted from the Social Security Act.

Dr. Falk has also written a good book. It presents the best detailed study of the experience with health insurance of four leading European countries and the benefits rendered there to the workers and employers as well as the medical profession. With facts and figures Dr. Falk gives the lie to the propaganda of the American Medical Association against health insurance and shows conclusively how such insurance when made compulsory was the cause of large economies in medical costs, as well as of improved public health.

During fifty years' experience in Germany the number of insured rose from 4,000,000 in 1885 to 22,500,000, or one-third of its entire population. The plan provides not only cash benefits but the services of doctors, surgeons, hospitals, sanatoria, drugs and surgical appliances. No one in Germany would think of doing away with the system; even Hitler has not made any important changes in the law.

The British system, with its twenty-five years of experience, covers about 80 percent of the gainfully occupied persons. Its panel system and general administration, so loudly denounced for twenty years by the American Medical Association, was initiated "upon the insistence of the medical profession," Dr. Falk informs us. It also operates with less friction than any other equally large insurance scheme. Nearly half of all British licensed practitioners are insurance doctors. British doctors heartily approve of the system, and Dr. Falk testifies that there is plenty of evidence to support the saying, "You couldn't blast the doctor out of insurance practice with dynamite." At much lower costs, insured persons in England "receive more than one-and-a-half times as many services from physicians as are received by members of representative American families in substantially the same income classes." And Dr. Falk finds the same general satisfaction in France and Denmark, which have only recently enacted compulsory health-insurance systems.

Despite the incomparably greater benefits received by the insured in European countries, Dr. Falk finds that "in the purchase of medical services American families of small means spend more (per person) from their private purses than is spent for medical care for insured persons and their dependents by the insurance institutions of France, Germany, England and Wales."

But Dr. Falk has also written a dangerous book. It may help to confuse American legislation for health insurance, just as the Wisconsin individual company reserves have helped to confuse unemployment insurance. The author continually draws nonexistent distinctions between the importance of medical and cash benefits. Never venturing to suggest that any country would dream of abolishing cash benefits, still he overemphasizes the strictly medical benefits to an extent that is dangerously misleading.

Dr. Falk's book substantiates the conviction of many social-insurance authorities that a fundamental knowledge of labor problems is essential to an understanding of the true meaning of social insurance. Dr. Falk is no expert on labor. His chief aim is to convert American doctors to health insurance. In trying to persuade them he is forced to follow tactics very close to those of the American Medical Association—that is, to exaggerate every minor difficulty of administering cash benefits and to keep saying that cash benefits are a separate and distinct problem. He repeatedly suggests that cash benefits for sickness "should be coupled administratively . . . with unemployment compensation rather than with health insurance." The simple fact is that the two plans can never function together, since unemployment benefits can be paid only when the worker's willingness and ability to work are established; sickness benefits only when the insured proves that he is too ill to work.

Dr. Falk's book is also marred by a number of omissions. Why does he, for instance, leave the impression that all discussion of health insurance in America began either in 1936 with the publication of his book, or, at the earliest, with the recommendations of the Committee on the Costs of Medical Care in 1932? Why does he fail to mention the bitter struggle for health insurance of 1915-20, when nearly a dozen state commissions studied the subject?—or the two model bills drafted by national associations fighting for this legislation?—or the scores of bills introduced in state legislatures and even in Congress?—or yet again the passage of a health-insurance bill by the New York Senate in 1919? Dr. Falk seems to be vastly more interested in the opinions of state medical journals and individual physicians. In failing to realize that the organized medical opposition cannot be swayed by facts and logic, he has missed an opportunity to awaken the general public which pays the medical bills.

ABRAHAM EPSTEIN.

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Fiction Parade

The Grown-Ups, by Catherine Whitcomb. New York: Random House. $2.50.

THE STORY of Camilla Madden is told with a purpose—to show the betrayal of children by grown-ups, particularly the grown-ups who don't stay married—and the publishers hope a copy of the book will fall into the hands of every divorced man and woman who has a child. Unlike Mr. Dooley's neighbors in Ar-rchey Road, when Camilla's parents got to the point where it was impossible for them to live together, they didn't go on living together. By the time Camilla was five, her mother had been twice divorced, her father once; before she was seventeen, the score was evened by two more marriages for father, one for mother; and the normal bewilderment of childhood and adolescence was intensified for the children by innumerable adjustments to new surroundings, people and *mores*. The development of Camilla shuttles through early years with her mother, life with her normal paternal grandparents, a time with her father and oversexed stepmother, and years in school—first a wholesome village school, later a super-sophisticated private institution for the very rich. In the process she grows from an almost psychopathic childhood into a premature, incredibly wise detachment—when she heard of the death of her mother: "She thought of her mother, but briefly; and . . . of all the people who had had an obligation to her and who had died or gone away or betrayed her in some way. Now it was all ended. She wanted none of them, the living or the dead." There is no question that growing pains can be aggravated by divorce, but the children of Jules Madden and Camilla Shane Madison Madden Horn would have been fully as harassed, doubtless more so, if their parents had continued to share each other's bed and board. Some people are apparently just unfit for domestic trust and responsibility. Camilla's story is consciously pathetic at times, sincerely moving at others; it is a good book on which to hang a sermon, but the examples don't fit the text.

B. E. BETTINGER.

Nightwood, by Djuna Barnes. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

DJUNA BARNES'S first novel comes from its English publication covered with praise and bearing an Introduction by T. S. Eliot, who insists that to regard its characters "as a horrid sideshow of freaks is not only to miss the point, but to confirm our wills and harden our hearts in an inveterate sin of pride."

The central character is the Irish-American doctor, "Matthew-Mighty-grain-of-salt-Dante-O'Connor," who asked nothing better "than to boil some good man's potatoes and toss up a child for him every nine months by the calendar." Somewhat reminiscent of Leopold Bloom, he attains a stature by the end of the book that for sheer power challenges, and possibly surpasses, any creation of Joyce. His memory he likes to think is prehistoric: like Eliot's Tiresias he has foresuffered all—perceives the scene, foretells the rest. Through him Felix, Baron Volkbein—the Wandering Jew, who longs for a son—meets Robin Vote, the strangest creature in the book. She is the "born somnambule, who lives in two worlds—meet of child and desperado"; hovering between an animal past and a human future, she is at once debauched and innocent. After marrying Felix and bearing him a sickly son, in whom the Baron sees his own demolition, she leaves him for Nora Flood. Eventually estranged from Nora, she finally abandons herself to the possession of Jenny Petherbridge, "the squatter."

The web of entanglement is naturally and inevitably woven, and the action progresses powerfully to its horrible conclusion. Though the characters are plainly and obtrusively psychopaths, the quality of the book does not derive from that particular, which is simply the mechanism of the tragedy, but from the force and distinction of Miss Barnes's writing. Her style is richly poetic; sometimes it becomes oppressive from a too conscious refinement of perception and language, but for the most part her wit and passion rescue it from its faults. In some passages the intensity of pity and terror effects something akin to genuine catharsis; in others, where the scope of implication contracts to the particular dilemma of the characters, a kind of hysteria results that leaves the reader merely horrified. Miss Barnes is at her best, both for style and characterization, in the glittering monologues of the Doctor, who talks too much because he suffers from a sense of what the others are keeping hushed. He goes into a "lather of misery," so he tells Nora, thinking of "how in the end you'll all be locked together, like the beasts that get their antlers mixed and are found dead that way, their heads fattened with a knowledge of each other they never wanted."

PHILIP HORTON.

The Boys in the Back Room, by Jules Romains. New York: Robert M. McBride and Company. $2.

AMERICAN readers chiefly familiar with Jules Romains through his work-in-progress, "Men of Good Will," will find it difficult to identify the character and tone of "The Boys in the Back Room" with the novelist they know. There are several good reasons for that. "The Boys in the Back Room" is comic, intimate and ribald. Romains at the time it was written was a commuting schoolmaster of twenty-five with a youthful longing for comradeship and roguish living. In his preface to the American translation, M. Romains admits the irrepressible antics of Bénin, Broudier and their *copains* owe much to his loneliness at the time, and to his boredom with his living routine. So, no doubt, do the freshness and frivolity of his style.

The "boys" are seven good friends, full of the devil, full of red wine, and full of a plot to punish the innocent towns of Ambert and Issoire. Something about the outline of those two towns on a departmental map of France incurs the drunken displeasure of Bénin. He loses no time in communicating the slight to his companions, and the seven of them set about their revenge, picking their course of action at random from a business directory. They descend on Ambert at midnight, as full of tricks as spirits at a séance. Broudier in the guise of a cabinet minister rouses the army to march on the Ambert city hall. Bénin, passing for a visiting theologian, delivers a lecherous sermon to the gullible high-mass congregation at the Ambert cathedral, and at Issoire another of the "boys" participates in the unveiling of a monument by impersonating the statue of a local hero—and then coming to life.

"We have restored the Pure Act!" says Bénin as the "boys" review their pranks—and that might be said to define the method and humor of their book. For the *co-*

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pains, despite the inadequate translation of the title into English, are far from barroom cut-ups. They are the enemies of logical action, the champions of the gratuitous act and the seeds of M. Romains' theory of unanism.

CHRISTOPHER LAZARE.

The Moon's Ride Over, by Carl Zuckmayer. New York: The Viking Press. $2.50.

"These are bad times for both saints and demons." Zuckmayer's novel deals with a witch, a waitress and a dilettante marking time in the cycle of events on an eerie alp till the moon rides over. With a deft touch for fantasy the author delineates the character of Magdalena, who has the misfortune to live in a time when the witch's occupation is gone. The book is concerned with several incidents of witchcraft and a desultory love affair within a worldly group gathered together in a castle in southern Tyrol. The author's sensitiveness to dramatic shadings is helped along by clear prose (very smoothly rendered into English) and a good eye for color; and in general those who like that sort of thing will like it a lot.

MARY SMART.

Contributors

JONATHAN MITCHELL, who lives in Washington, D. C., has written many articles on politics and national affairs for The New Republic and other magazines.

ANDRÉ GIDE is regarded by many as the most distinguished man of letters in France. He was born in Paris in 1869, the son of a well-to-do Protestant family. His complete works include novels, plays, poems, diaries and an autobiography, which was published in America by Random House in the fall of 1935 under the title "If It Die."

JAMES STILL lives and works at the Hindman Settlement School on Troublesome Creek in the mountains near Hindman, Kentucky, where he was born.

HILDEGARDE FLANNER has taken an active part in the work of the Western Writers' Congress. She is the author of "Time's Profile," a book of verse.

KATHERINE ANNE PORTER, who holds a Book-of-the-Month Club Fellowship for 1937, was brought up in Texas and Louisiana. Her volume of short stories, "Flowering Judas," was republished last year by Harcourt, Brace and she is now at work on five short novels soon to be published under the title "Pale Horse, Pale Rider."

ABRAHAM EPSTEIN, author of "Insecurity: A Challenge to America" and other books, is executive secretary of the American Association for Social Security, Inc.

B. E. BETTINGER, a member of the staff of The New Republic, has contributed book reviews to The Nation and The New York Herald Tribune Books.

PHILIP HORTON has just finished a biography of Hart Crane, to be published this spring by W. W. Norton. He has contributed to The New Republic, The Southern Review and The New Masses.

CHRISTOPHER LAZARE has contributed to The New Republic, The Nation and to Kay Boyle's anthology, "365 Days."

MARY SMART is a student at Bennington College.

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